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3

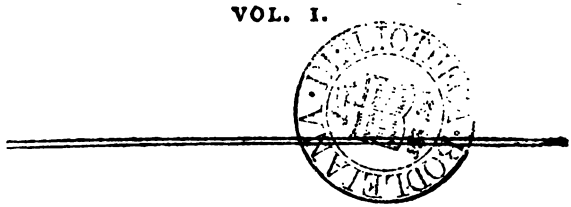
MONTALBERT.

A NOVEL.

BY CHARLOTTE SMITH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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MONTALBERT.

CHAPTER I.

IN one of thoſe villages, immediately under the ridge of chalky hills, called the South Downs; where the ſoil changing ſuddenly to a ſtrong clay, renders the country deep, and the roads bad; there dwelt, a few years ſince, the rector of a neighbouring pariſh, of the name of Leſſington. In the village where he lived he was only the curate; chuſing his reſidence there, becauſe the houſe was larger and more commodious, than that which belonged to his own living three miles diſtant. His family conſiſted of a wife, two ſons, and four daughters.

One of the ſons had a fellowſhip at Oxford; the other, was a younger partner in a reſpectable tradeſman's houſe in London.

The daughters were reckoned handſome; the two eldeſt had been for ſome years the toaſts at the convivial meetings in the next market towns; the third was now a candidate for an equal ſhare of ruſtic admiration, and her claims were generally allowed; but the youngeſt, who was about eighteen, when this narrative commences, though ſhe was ſtill conſidered as a child by her ſiſters, and treated as ſuch by her mother; was thought by ſome of the few perſons who happened to ſee her, to be much the handſomeſt of the four, though her beauty was of a very different character from that of her ſiſters.

Perhaps in theſe days of refinement, the imagination might be in ſome degree aſſiſted, by the romantic ſingularity of her name; ſhe was called Roſalie at the requeſt of a lady of the Catholic religion, the wife of a man of very large fortune, who ſometimes inhabited an old family ſeat, about three miles farther from the hills: Mrs. Leſſington had been for ſome years her moſt intimate friend, and accepted with pleaſure her offer of anſwering for, and giving her name, to the youngeſt of her girls. Mrs. Vyvian, the daughter of

an

an illuſtrious Catholic family, being born at Naples, had received the name of the female ſaint ſo highly venerated in the two Sicilies; and before her marriage, had lived a good deal alone with an infirm father at Holmwood Houſe, which having deſcended to her mother from noble anceſtors, became hers, and was part of the great fortune ſhe brought to Mr. Vyvian.

During the ſolitary years when ſhe attended the couch of a parent, the victim of complicated diſeaſes, the ſociety of Mrs. Leſſington had been her greateſt conſolation. It continued ſo till her marriage—a marriage which ſhe was compelled to conſent to, by her father's peremptory commands. Mrs. Vyvian afterwards paſſed ſome years on the continent with her huſband, and returned to England mother of three children, a ſon and two daughters. And whenever this family inhabited the old manſion-houſe of Holmwood, Roſalie paſſed all her time with them. When young Vyvian was about thirteen, his ſiſters twelve and eleven, the young ladies were ſo much attached to their companion, that Mrs. Vyvian, to indulge them, took her

with them to London, and afterwards to their eſtate in the North. Young Vyvian, the only ſon of the family, being ſent abroad, Roſalie remained with his mother and ſiſters above two years, making only ſhort viſits at home. At the end of that period, Mr. Vyvian thought proper to have his daughters introduced into the world, and in a ſtile of life to which Roſalie could have no pretenſions; ſhe therefore returned to the parſonage, and though ſhe could not but be ſenſible of the great change in her ſituation; her good ſenſe, and the peculiar mildneſs of her diſpoſition, enabled her, if not to conquer her regret, at leaſt ſo far to conceal it, that though generally penſive, ſhe was neither ſullen nor melancholy, and entered with placid reſignation into a way of life, ſo different from that to which ſhe had (ſhe now thought unfortunately) been accuſtomed.—Her mother, who probably remembered that ſhe had been ſenſible of ſomething like the ſame uneaſy ſenſation when ſhe bade adieu to the ſociety of her friend, then Miſs Montalbert, to marry Mr. Leſſington, ſeemed to

pity,

pity, though ſhe forbore to notice, the dejection which was occaſionally viſible in her youngeſt daughter, in deſpite of her endeavours to hide it. As to her father, he treated her as he did the reſt, with general kindneſs, but no marked affection. Her ſiſters were not unkind to her ſo long as ſhe affected no ſuperiority, but ſeemed better pleaſed to be conſidered as too young to be admitted of their parties, than to make one, where ſhe knew ſhe ſhould find no enjoyment, and they were on their parts content to leave out, as long as they could, a perſon who would be at leaſt a formidable competitor for the prize of beauty. The eldeſt was courted by a gentleman farmer of conſiderable property in the county, the ſecond by an attorney in a neighbouring town, and as theſe lovers were accepted, parties of pleaſure were continually made for the Miſs Leſſingtons. Sometimes to the ſea-coaſt, or to races or cricket matches; Mr. Leſſington attended his daughters on theſe expeditions, till the eldeſt was married. The care of Miſs Catharine and Miſs Maria, was then left to her, and

the Vicar of Mayfield returned to the duties of his pariſhes, and his farm.

On theſe occaſions, Mrs. Leſſington and her youngeſt daughter being left alone, their converſation ſometimes turned on the family of Vyvian. It was a ſubject of which Roſalie was never weary, though it was not always that her mother would indulge her with talking upon it. Roſalie was tenderly and gratefully attached to Mrs. Vyvian, even more than to her young friends; and frequently mentioned to her mother, how much ſhe had been hurt at remarking, during the latter part of her ſtay in the family, that this amiable and excellent woman was extremely unhappy. One day when they were ſitting at work together, this converſation was renewed—"You hear nothing, Madam, (ſaid Roſalie to her mother), of our neighbours at Holmwood Park, being to come down ſoon."—"Nothing (replied her mother, coldly); I ſuppoſe, from what Mr. Allingham ſaid, (Mr. Allingham was the Catholic prieſt of the neighbouring town), that we ſhall not ſee them here this year."—Roſalie ſighed.—

"He

"He told me (added Mrs. Leſſington), that Mrs. Vyvian was ſo much indiſpoſed when he ſaw her in town, that the phyſicians talked of ordering her to Cheltenham; it is more than two months ſince I have had a letter from her."—Roſalie ſighed again.—"It is her mind (ſaid ſhe), that preys upon her frame; and will, I am afraid, deſtroy her."

"I hope not (replied Mrs. Leſſington), for I think her ſpirits have been always much the ſame ſince I knew her. Perhaps they are not mended by Mr. Vyvian's having renounced his religion, and by having her children brought up Proteſtants, contrary to his promiſe, when he himſelf changed; beſides, you know he is a harſh and haſty man, poſitive, violent, and ill-natured enough to make a woman, like Mrs. Vyvian, unhappy, if there is no *other* cauſe."

"Ah! that *other* (ſaid Roſalie), I have heard a great deal about it."

"About what?" cried Mrs. Leſſington, in a tone of ſurpriſe.

"About the—the—the lover, (replied Roſalie, bluſhing.) That Mrs. Vyvian was

ſo much attached to before ſhe was married to Mr. Vyvian."

" I don't know (ſaid her mother, colouring as if by ſympathy), who could tell you, child, of any ſuch fooliſh ſtory."

" Nay, dear Madam, but was it not ſo?"

" Was it not, how? *I* really know nothing about it, and yet I believe nobody ſaw ſo much of my friend Mrs. Vyvian, as I did at that time; for though it was long after I married, I uſed to be almoſt as much with her as when we were both ſingle."

" The gentleman is ſtill living, Madam," ſaid Roſalie.

" I again aſſure you Roſe, (replied her mother, peeviſhly), that I know nothing of—of *any* gentleman. But I think I heard your father come into his ſtudy—Do child aſk him for the key of the cloſet above."

Roſalie obeyed; but ſhe well knew her father was not in his ſtudy, and ſaw that her mother only ſent her to ſeek him, that ſhe might eſcape from converſation, which for ſome reaſon or other, ſhe was ſtrangely unwilling to continue. This was not the firſt time

time Roſalie had remarked, that her mother ſolicitouſly avoided recounting any circumſtance that uſed to happen in her girliſh days, at thoſe periods when ſhe was connected with the family of Montalbert: and if ever ſhe unconſciouſly began to ſpeak of Miſs Montalbert, now Mrs. Vyvian, ſhe either ſtopped as ſoon as ſhe recollected herſelf, and changed the converſation, or ſpoke in a manner particularly guarded, and only of trifling occurrences.

" What can be my mother's reaſon? (ſaid Roſalie, muſing to herſelf as ſhe went to walk in their little garden), there is ſome myſtery certainly; ſurely the marriage with the man Mrs. Vyvian was ſo attached to, could not have been broken off on *her* account?—Impoſſible! for though my mother, I believe, has been a very handſome woman, ſhe certainly never could be compared to her friend; who even now, in ill health, and half heart-broken, as ſhe is, is much more beautiful than either of her daughters."

Roſalie ſighing when ſhe thought of Mrs. Vyvian's illneſs, and regretting that ſhe did not this year come into the country, felt all

the cold and blank regret, which departed pleaſure leaves. She wiſhed now, that ſhe had paſſed leſs time in the Vyvian family, where ſhe had been accuſtomed to the converſation of Mrs. Vyvian, of which ſhe was particularly fond; and to a manner of life, very different from that which ſhe was now in—ſtill more different, from what it was probable ſhe would be expected to enter into, when her two elder ſiſters were both married: her father having lately ſaid, half laughingly, and as if he ſuppoſed it would pleaſe her, that ſhe ſhould then go out with Maria; appear at aſſemblies, and try to get an huſband too; for he wanted to get his girls off his hands as faſt as he could.

Roſalie felt that ſhe had an invincible averſion to this plan of dreſſing and going out in hopes of getting, as her father termed it, an huſband. She was convinced, that to be addreſſed by ſuch men as the huſband of her eldeſt ſiſter, or the man to whom the ſecond was ſoon to be married, would render her completely miſerable; for it ſeemed but too probable, that her father would not allow her a negative.

Youth,

Youth, however, dwells not long on remote poſſibilities—But though no acute uneaſineſs aſſailed her, the languor and dejection of Roſalie increaſed as the autumn came on; ſolitude was infinitely preferable to the ſociety, ſuch as was at preſent within her reach; but ſecluſion ſo perfect as that ſhe was now condemned to, depreſſed her ſpirits. In every other period of her being at home, at this ſeaſon of the year, her elder brother had been there alſo, who being very partial to her, delighted to inſtruct her; but now this dear brother was gone into the North with one of his college friends, and was to be at home only for a few days before his return to Oxford. She thought every body was gone to the North, for the Vyvian family were perhaps there by this time, if Mrs. Vyvian's health had allowed her to leave Cheltenham—and never had ſhe felt ſo dejected and forlorn. The hill which aroſe immediately behind the vicarage houſe, afforded a view, even half way up, of a great extent of country, and Holmwood Park, the old family ſeat of Mr. Vyvian, though at near three miles diſtance, ſeemed to be with-

in five minutes walk. Roſalie had now a melancholy pleaſure, in viewing it from the high grounds, as the ſetting ſun blazed on the weſtern windows, while the characters of the inhabitants were forcibly recalled to her mind.

Mr. Vyvian, a man of very extenſive poſſeſſions, and the head of an ancient Catholic family, had been rather received as an huſband by Miſs Montalbert, becauſe her father commanded her to receive him, than for any other reaſon; for ſo far were they from having any ſympathy, that their religion was the only thing in which they agreed, and even that tie of union between them did not long exiſt; for ſoon after the death of his wife's father, he renounced the church of Rome, and going through all the ceremonies of reconciliation to that of England, entitled himſelf to repreſent a borough that belonged to him, and became a member of parliament. From that time, the tutors that had been entruſted with the education of his ſon, were removed; his daughters, contrary to the promiſe he had at firſt made to his wife, were no longer ſuffered to go to maſs, or to be inſtructed

ſtructed by the old prieſt, who had for a great number of years reſided in their mother's houſe. And Mrs. Vyvian, who was ſtrongly attached to the religion of her anceſtors, was from that period a ſolitary and inſolated being in the midſt of her family.

Mr. Vyvian was one of thoſe men, who, naturally haughty and tyrannical, had never known, becauſe he never would endure, the leaſt contradiction. His temper reſembled that of thoſe reaſonable beings one ſometimes ſees among the common people, who not unfrequently beat their children till they make them cry; and then beat them for crying. Juſt ſo he contrived to do exactly what he knew would make his wife completely miſerable, and then quarrelled with her becauſe ſhe could not (though ſhe endeavoured to do ſo moſt ſincerely), always conceal her wretchedneſs. Till lately, ſhe had found the eſtrangement of her daughters, who too much reſembled their father, compenſated in a great meaſure by the attentive gratitude of Roſalie, who uſed to paſs much of her time at Holmwood, while Mrs. Vyvian was there alone, and her family remain-

ed in London. But lately ſhe appeared to have loſt all pleaſure, even in viſiting this favourite ſeat; and though when ſhe did write to Mrs. Leſſington, or to Roſalie, her letters expreſſed all her former regard, yet theſe letters became every day more rare; at length ſhe hardly ever wrote to Roſalie; an air of languor and diſquiet pervaded thoſe parts of the letters addreſſed to her mother, that Roſalie ſometimes ſaw; for it now and then happened, that Mrs. Leſſington received letters which her daughter knew to be from Mrs. Vyvian, the contents of which ſhe never diſcloſed, and did not ſeem pleaſed to be queſtioned upon them.— Theſe Roſalie concluded were filled with the murmurs of an oppreſſed heart, that found a melancholy indulgence in pouring its hopeleſs ſorrows into the boſom of an old and faithful friend; though ſhe herſelf had never heard one repining ſentence.

The venerable prieſt, now the only inhabitant, except ſervants of the ſolitary manſion of Holmwood, had been accuſtomed to walk over now and then to Barlton-Brook (the name

name of the parish where the Leffington family reſided); and Roſalie, who honoured his character, and knew how highly Mrs. Vyvian eſteemed him, was never happier than when ſhe was allowed to make his tea for him, or to walk with him part of the way home. During the preſent ſummer, however, theſe viſits had become leſs frequent, and at length entirely ceaſed; a terrible deprivation to Roſalie, though none of the reſt of the family ſeemed conſcious that it had happened. Roſalie at length remarked it to her mother, who anſwered drily, that Mr. Hayward was probably ill. "May I not walk over ſome day to Holmwood, Mamma, and ſee how he does?"

"I do not know when I can ſpare you, my dear," was the reply, and the converſation dropped.

Another, and another week paſſed, and Mr. Hayward did not appear. Roſalie then enquired news of him, of one of thoſe itinerant fiſhmongers who travel round the country, and who conſtantly carried his wares to Holmwood. The man aſſured her that he had

had that day ſeen Mr. Hayward in good health. Roſalie ſoon afterwards diſcovered, but with extreme vexation, that her old friend forbore to viſit her, becauſe it had been hinted to him, that the ſuſpicion of his influencing her on religious ſubjects was likely to be very injurious to her future proſpects in the world: Mr. Grierſon, who had married her elder ſiſter, and Mr. Blagham, the intended huſband of the ſecond, having declared their apprehenſions of her becoming a Papiſt; in which opinion two young men who had very much admired her, alſo agreed. The ſiſters of one of them proteſting that *ſhe was ſure Miſs Roſe Leſſington was diſpoſed to that religion, which made her give into ſuch mopiſh ways, and always to affect ſolitude, like nuns, and ſuch ſort of people.* Thus deprived of the innocent pleaſure of converſing with a man, who from her infancy ſhe had conſidered almoſt as a ſecond father; a cypher at home; and rather ſuffered as one of the family, than ſeeming to make a part of it, neceſſary to the happineſs of the reſt, Roſalie had no other reſource than in her own mind againſt the unvarying

medium

medium of life. Her mother, though not more ignorant than the generality of women in middling life, had received no better education than a country boarding ſchool afforded, which five and thirty years ago were much leſs celebrated for the *accompliſhments* they communicated, than they are at preſent. Since that period, ſhe had ſtudied the utile, rather than the dulci. Having before her marriage lived very much in the family of Montalbert, though by no means in the ſtile of an humble companion (for ſhe had a ſmall independent fortune), ſhe had accuſtomed herſelf to undertake many little domeſtic duties for the friend ſhe loved, and after her marriage, ſhe had a family, which kept her conſtantly occupied; ſo that never having had her curioſity raiſed in regard to books, and never having been accuſtomed to read, ſhe had now no reliſh even for books of amuſement; and wondered at the eagerneſs ſhe ſometimes heard her acquaintance expreſs for them. It may eaſily be believed, that thus diſpoſed, ſhe had no collection of books likely to amuſe her daughter; who had long ſince exhauſted all the information

or entertainment afforded, by an odd volume of the Tatler—Robinſon Cruſoe—Nelſon's Feaſts and Faſts—Harvey's Meditations—a volume of Echard's Gazetteer—Mrs. Glaſs's Cookery—and Every Lady her own Houſe-keeper.

The library of Mr. Leſſington, though more extenſive and occupying a room dignified with the name of a ſtudy, was not better adapted to beguile the ſolitary hours of a very young woman. It conſiſted ſolely of ſermons—Polemic's—ſuch publications as related to Queſtions on Infant Baptiſm, and Elaborate Defences of the Thirty-nine Articles—Clarendon's Hiſtory—Rapin, and bad Tranſlations of Mezerai and Froiſſart—an old Hiſtory of Rome, in black letter—Joſephus—Thomas à Kempis—Elucidations of difficult Parts of Scripture—and Treatiſes on the Nature of the Soul. Among all theſe it was the hiſtory only that could attract Roſalie; and during this ſolitary ſummer, ſhe became a tolerable hiſtorian: though ſhe did not find it either contributed to enlarge her philanthropy, or furniſh her with rules for the conduct of her life; ſince ſhe flattered herſelf,

herſelf, that beings ſo diſhoneſt and deſpicable as modern hiſtory repreſents, are found only in thoſe elevated regions of human exiſtence where it was never likely to be her lot to move.

During her frequent viſits to the family of Vyvian, where that language was generally ſpoken, Roſalie had learned to ſpeak French fluently; could read well, and ſpeak a little Italian, which Mr. Hayward had taken great pleaſure in teaching her. The little acquirements were, ſhe knew not for what reaſon, more the objects of her ſiſters' envy than any other of the advantages her being with the Miſs Vyvians might have given her over them. She ſaw with ſurpriſe and concern, that though her ſiſters were as little, as ſhe now was herſelf, in company where to ſpeak foreign languages could be of the ſlighteſt advantage, yet that *her* being qualified to do ſo, vexed and humbled them. She therefore concealed what indeed there was now little merit, and leſs difficulty in concealing; and having no books to read in either language, and no longer any opportunity of converſing with Mr. Hayward, ſhe

felt

felt with infinite concern that this ſource of amuſement and of knowledge would very ſoon be loſt to her.

The only pleaſure ſhe now found was in drawing; in which, though no great proficient, ſhe was far enough advanced to find herſelf improve very materially, by following, and continually practiſing the few rules ſhe had learned. To ſeat herſelf on the turf of the down above the houſe, on the root of a thorn, or one of thoſe beech trees which were ſcattered about the foot of the hill, and make ſketches of detached pieces of the extenſive landſcape ſtretched before her; or of the old and fantaſtic trees that formed her ſhady canopy, was now become her only enjoyment; and very ſincerely did ſhe regret, and very reluctantly did ſhe obey the ſummons, ſhe too frequently received to return to the houſe, either to make tea for ſome accidental viſitors of her new brother-in-law's acquaintance, or to ſuperintend a ſyllabub in the ſummer-houſe. Theſe parties calling at the parſonage, now became frequent, for this new member of the family lived in the vale, a few miles from Barlton Brook; and the

the houſe of his father-in-law lay directly in the horſe way to what is called in that country, "up the hills." Thoſe hills (the South Downs), gradually decline towards the ſea. On the coaſt, within a few years, many bathing places have been eſtabliſhed, where the ſick and the idle paſs the ſummer or autumnal months. The variety of people thus collected, make a viſit to the ſea-coaſt, a pleaſurable jaunt to the inhabitants of the neighbouring country: and Mr. Grierſon, a man perfectly at eaſe in his circumſtances, and lately married to one of the moſt celebrated beauties of the county, failed not to amuſe his bride and her friends with many of theſe tours. His future brother-in-law, Blagham the attorney, who lived at Chicheſter, was a great promoter of what he called "a little ſociability." He gratified at once two paſſions; the love of what he called pleaſure, and the proſpect of future advantage, to which he always looked forward with peculiar earneſtneſs. While he was buſtling about with Grierſon and his wife, together with his "own intended," as he choſe to call her, he was diſplaying his ſkill in ordering

dinners,

dinners, in hiring boats for water-parties, in conſoling "*the ladies*," when they were ſick, and "*cutting jokes upon them when they got better.* In making ſure bets at Broad* Halfpenny, for "Egad, Sir, he always knew what he was about." And in hedging well at poney races; and while this went on, "Egad, Sir, he never loſt ſight of the main chance—not he: egad, Sir, he had all his eyes about him."

And it was true, that while thus entered into what he called "the enjoyments of life, *and a little ſociability*," he made acquaintance among the yeomanry, or the few of that rank of men who are ſtill *called* ſo: among men, however, who had money to put out at intereſt, and who employed him to find for them good ſecurities, and to tranſact other matters for them. So that though a young man in the honourable profeſſion of an attorney, and newly eſtabliſhed in the already well-ſtocked city of Chicheſter, he was conſidered as very likely to make his fortune;

* A down in Hampſhire, on the borders of Suſſex, the reſort of both counties for cricket matches.

and

and Mr. Leſſington had, in the contemplation of ſuch a proſpect, granted him the hand of the fair Catharine, his ſecond daughter; rich indeed only in herſelf—in very handſome wedding clothes, that were now preparing for her; and in her connections and acquaintance among the gentlemen's families of the county.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

IT was on a beautiful afternoon towards the end of Auguſt, when Roſalie retired to her uſual ſeat on the hill; was again engaged in her now favourite occupation. The rays of the ſun declining early in the afternoon, gilt the landſcape with tints more than uſually luxurious. Holmwood Houſe, its windows always lighted up when theſe evening rays glanced on them, was an object which, as it continually forced itſelf upon her obſervation, ſhe almoſt for the firſt time in her life wiſhed to eſcape from. Yet inſenſibly it brought to her mind a train of ideas—melancholy, yet not to be repelled, her pencils, and drawing cards, were laid down on the turf, while with folded arms, and her head reclined againſt the tree ſhe was ſitting under, ſhe fell into a reverie. A long row of old ſtone pines, ſtretched their groteſque heads from the eaſtern ſide of the houſe towards a riſing

riſing ground, where this wild and irregular avenue was terminated by an octagon temple, now falling faſt to ruin; where Roſalie remembered to have paſſed many hours when ſhe was a child, the happy thoughtleſs companion of the little Vyvians, who uſed to call this old ſummer-houſe their houſe, and to carry thither their playthings, and make their ſportive arrangements, while their governeſs, a little old French woman, was accuſtomed to ſit on the ſteps knitting or netting. The ſteps Roſalie could diſtinguiſh from her ſolitary ſeat on the hill, but the playful group and their odd little guardian were gone..... Roſalie recollected how happy ſhe had been there, and already ſhe had acquired that painful experience that had made her fear ſhe ſhould taſte of unalloyed happineſs no more. Her friend and protectreſs, Mrs. Vyvian, who now ſeemed to have deſerted, from ſome unaccountable change of taſte, the habitation ſhe was once ſo fond of, appeared before her in imagination more pale and dejected than uſual. She fancied ſhe ſaw her ſlowly coming out of the little conſervatory, which ſhe had cauſed to be built,

and in which ſhe took peculiar pleaſure: ſhe had a noſegay in her hand for each of her girls—and Roſalie was once received under that appellation—and ſhe beckoned to them as ſhe ſaw them walking in the ſhrubbery, and, with one of her penſive ſmiles, gave to every one her little preſent. The Abbé Hayward, that excellent and venerable man, met her: benignity and pious reſignation were in his countenance, as he endeavoured to find ſome converſation that might cheer the depreſſed ſpirits of Mrs. Vyvian. She bade her daughters and Roſalie walk before them; and, making a ſhort tour in the plantations, ſeemed to remove her languor, and enable her to meet her family at ſupper with ſome appearance of cheerfulneſs.

Such were the ſcenes Roſalie was recalling to her mind, and ſuch the figures with which memory was buſy in peopling them, when her contemplations were diſturbed by figures very different, who preſented themſelves under all the diſadvantages of contraſt.... Blagham, and two other young men, whom ſhe did not recollect ever to have

ſeen

ſeen before, came whooping and hallooing from the houſe, and aſcended the hill towards her; as it ſoon became very ſteep, Blagham leaped from his horſe and ran towards her, and the other two followed him.

"Why, my ſweet Roſe, (cried he), my Roſe of the world! why do you cruelly hide yourſelf among thorns? Only to be looked after—ch'! my pretty Roſe,—Aye, 'tis the way of you all:——there's my Kate below yonder, would fain ſerve me the ſame ſauce—but I'm come to drink tea with you, my dear little ſiſter, that is to be, and to introduce two of my friends to you. (The friends by this time were come to the ſpot). This, Madam, is Captain Mildred of the 69th, now quartered in our town; and this, (added he, with all ſolemnity), this is the Rev. Philibert Hughſon, a worthy clergyman, and Rector of Higgington cum Sillingbourn in this county." Roſalie had nothing to do but to curteſy to them both: her future brother-in-law, however, had not yet done with her; but, ſtepping back, he made a ridiculous bow, and, in a theatrical tone, exclaimed, "And now, gentlemen, give me the ſuperlative

pleaſure of introducing to *your* admiration Miſs Roſalie Leſſington, fourth and youngeſt daughter of the Rev. Joſeph Leſſington, Maſter of Arts, Vicar of Cold Hampton, and Curate of Barlton Brooks in this county: a young lady, of whoſe perſonal perfections, gentlemen, I dare not ſpeak; but who is, I may venture to ſay, endowed with every qualification to render the marriage ſtate completely happy."—Shocked and amazed at this impertinent addreſs, Roſalie felt her cheeks glow with anger and indignation, but, recovering herſelf, ſhe aſked coldly if her mother had ſent for her?

"She has—ſhe has—(cried her perſecutor, whom ſhe now perceived had added to his natural impertinence all that which liquor gives when it overflows a ſhallow brain)—She has, fair flower of the deſart, and we are the beatified ambaſſadors charged with the delectable commiſſion. Come then, bright nymph!"———

He was proceeding in this ſtyle, when Roſalie, taking from him the hand he would forcibly have held, ſaid, "I wiſh my mother had ſent ſome perſon who was more in poſ-

ſeſſion

ſeſſion of his reaſon."——"Ah! Madam, (cried the young man, who was announced as the Rev. Philibert Hughſon), there are moments when reaſon is loſt in wonder and delight, and when"——"What, Sir?" interrupted Roſalie, in a tone ſo unexpected, that the young divine was unable to proceed, and even bluſhed as he attempted to finiſh a ſpeech which he probably thought was in the ſtyle of the ſociety he was with.

As they walked down the hill towards the houſe ſhe turned to Captain Mildred, who, as he had hitherto been ſilent, had not offended her; and who, being an officer, ſhe hoped was a gentleman, and entered with him into the common converſation, while Blagham, too drunk to make much ſpeed, ſtaggered after them, and Mr. Hughſon went ſidling down a little before her, as if ſtill ſolicitous to attract her notice, yet half afraid of another rebuff, was trying to recal his conſciouſneſs of ſelf-importance.—The Rev. Philibert Hughſon was what is called a dapper, tight-made, little man: his face neither well nor ill, but with ſomething in the expreſſion of it that ſoon let an ob-

ſerver of faces into his character. If the Rev. Philibert Hughſon had even ventured to think, in the ſame unreſtrained manner in which he ſometimes ſpoke, it is very certain that he thought himſelf a d——d clever fellow. The ſecond ſon of a very rich father, he had been a buck of the firſt head at Cambridge, ſpent four times as much as he was allowed, and contrived to get ſome thouſands in debt. He was an excellent judge of horſe fleſh, and a great connoiſſeur in carriages: he knew the dimenſions and properties of every vehicle from a phaeton to a ſulky; had poſſeſſed them all by turns, and had changed them oftener than his cloaths or his friends. He had made a merit of taking orders, when he knew his careful father had bought the valuable livings of Higginſton cum Sillingbourn, worth together above eight hundred a year. Nor did he determine to make this ſacrifice, and, from the ſmarteſt fellow at Cambridge, ſink into a country parſon, till he had ſtipulated for the payment of his debts, and a handſome ſum in ready money. He then cut off his hair, turned his green coat into a gray one, and

reſolved

reſolved to be very orthodox and very good: his father, moſt devoutly hoping he would keep his word, complied with all his conditions, and was delighted when he had ſworn he felt an irreſiſtible call from heaven, and was inducted to the living of Higginſton cum Sillingbourn. The moſt pleaſant circumſtance attending his new ſituation was, that this cure of ſouls was undertaken in the beſt country poſſible for killing pheaſants, and not half a mile from him partridges were equally plenty. A pack of the beſt fox hounds in England were within five miles, and he had grey-hounds of his own of the true Orford breed. To take advantage of all theſe pleaſures, he had begun by fitting up and enlarging the ſtables, filling them with high-prized hunters, and ſending to Newmarket for boys to attend them: he ſtored his cellars—furniſhed his houſe for his brother ſportſmen who had promiſed to viſit him—bought a new phaeton; changed it for a curricle; then imagined a new whiſky of his own compoſing, calculated for the Suſſex roads; and, in ſhort, during the eight months that he had been in poſſeſſion of the living,

had felt ſo many irreſiſtible impulſes, beſides that which had given ſo valuable a member to the church, that he had already received from the friendſhip of his dear friend Blagham a trifling accommodation of 'the needful'—for to apply to the old gentleman ſo ſoon was hardly diſcreet; parental patience, like ſome other virtues, being ſometimes apt to wear out, if too frequently called into uſe.

Mr. Blagham had not been many days introduced to the Rev. Philibert Hughſon, before he diſcovered that ſomething very advantageous might ariſe from cultivating his acquaintance. He perfectly underſtood the way to recommend himſelf, and ſet about it with ſo much zeal, that he became very ſoon the deareſt friend he had in the world..... Blagham thought he could not do better than endeavour to recommend one of the ſiſters of his intended wife, and he had already tried to perſuade his friend that he was in love with Maria, in which he would probably have ſucceeded, if, at a convivial meeting where the beauty of the neighbouring damſels was canvaſſed, ſome young man, who had accidentally ſeen Roſalie, had not warmly aſſured

aſſured him, that ſhe was the prettieſt girl in the county; and when another ſpoke of the celebrity of her ſiſters, agreed that they were fine women, but aſſured Mr. Hughſon, to whom he ſat near, in half a whiſper, that there was no more compariſon between them and the youngeſt ſiſter than between light and darkneſs. This had greatly raiſed the curioſity of Hughſon, who had ſince preſſed his friend Blagham to carry him to the houſe of his intended father-in-law; a requeſt which was heard with pleaſure, and immediately granted.

Equally raſh and headſtrong in whatever he undertook, Hughſon was paſſionately in love at firſt ſight, and as immediately determined to purſue the object that had thus ſtruck him, nothing doubting her ready and even joyful acceptance of a man ſo unexceptionable in point of fortune, and ſo very clever a fellow. Under this impreſſion he took no pains to conceal his admiration, but perſecuted the diſtreſſed and reluctant Roſalie with ſpeeches to which it was impoſſible for her to reply. She looked timidly towards her father for protection, but ſhe ſaw, that

far from being willing to afford it to her, he ſeemed delighted with the attention Mr. Hughſon paid her, and ſmiled and rubbed his hands, as who ſhould ſay, "Oh! oh! here comes another chapman for another of my girls."—Mrs. Leſſington appeared to be impreſſed with the ſame idea, and overwhelmed the little man with civility, while Maria, to whom he had before ſhewn a great preference, and who ſeemed to have been much better pleaſed with it, was piqued at his now addreſſing himſelf entirely to her ſiſter, and ſhewed that ſhe ſeverely felt the mortification, but endeavoured to conceal her vexation, by laughing and talking with Captain Mildred, who, being one of thoſe military heroes whoſe talents are greater in the field than in the cabinet, ſhe found it rather difficult to keep up the gaiety ſhe affected; for Captain Mildred, beſides that his head was very ſcantily ſtocked with ideas, was too fine a man to give himſelf the trouble to produce the few he had to amuſe a country parſon's daughter. He only came with Blagham and Hughſon becauſe he had nothing better to do with himſelf, and had beſides

beſides an inclination to buy one of Hughſon's horſes, which he was in hopes of getting a bargain, and which he had therefore been depreciating, and trying to put the little divine out of conceit with it; telling him that the horſe, in the firſt place, had been ſtrained behind, and would never ſtand ſound; "And beſides, (ſaid he), my dear Doctor, it grieves all your friends to ſee you upon ſuch a tall, long-legged animal. By Heavens! Jack Norton of our regiment called to me the other day, as you rode through Eaſt Street, and aſked me who that little fellow upon the tall horſe was? 'For damme, (ſays he), he puts me in mind of Tom Thumb upon an elephant."—Such was Captain Mildred, on whom neither beauty nor wit could make the ſlighteſt impreſſion, and who, equally ſtupid and ſelfiſh, had every qualification for a rogue, except talents. But he had a tolerable perſon, a red coat, and was ſaid to be a man of fortune; ſo that he had been reckoned among the miſſes a very charming man, and their mamas had invited him to their concerts and their card parties.

Before the tea was finiſhed, at which Roſalie ſo reluctantly aſſiſted, Mr. Hughſon received from both her father and mother the moſt preſſing invitation to renew his viſits as often as he could. "And I hope, my good Sir, (cried Mr. Leſſington), I hope you will not let the beginning of the ſhooting ſeaſon deprive us of the happineſs of ſeeing you, for, I aſſure you, we ſhall have excellent ſport round about this village. I myſelf know of a great number of birds: I expect my ſon too; my eldeſt ſon, will be here ſhortly, and I am ſure he will be greatly flattered by the honour of your acquaintance."

"I am ſure he will not, (ſighed Roſalie to herſelf); for never can a man be imagined whom William would like ſo little: but, alas! my father knows he is not coming."

Plans were now talked of for the next week, which Hughſon ſpoke of as dedicated to the gun, with childiſh eagerneſs. He gave to Mr. Leſſington a very long and elaborate deſcription of a new gun he had bought, which had coſt him five and twenty guineas:

not

not indeed that he wanted any ſuch thing, for he was an admirable ſhot—killed nineteen out of twenty, and was reckoned as ſure as any man in Norfolk. "I remember about two years ago, (ſaid he), I went out, only I and my father's gamekeeper, and we killed, that is, I killed, about forty brace in about five hours, for he hardly ever fired."

"Birds were remarkably plenty I ſuppoſe," ſaid Mr. Leſſington.

"Why no, really not ſo very remarkably plenty—I have ſeen them as much ſo: but, my dear Sir, Norfolk is the county for game....why, I have ſeen, Sir, of a morning, when the birds were at feed, the very ground covered with them, ſo that you could not have thrown a pebble without touching them—as cloſe, Sir—as cloſe."——

Leſſington, who by a glance from Roſalie's eye, ſaw that Hughſon was doing himſelf diſſervice with her by this ſort of rhodomontading, ſaved him the trouble of finding the compariſon he was ſeeking for, by ſaying, "Yes, yes——I have been in Norfolk——I know there is a prodigious quantity of game in that county."

But Hughſon, elevated with wine and inſpired by love, could no longer check the violent inclination he always felt to relate ſome very marvellous ſtory; and to make himſelf the hero of it, he thought it was impoſſible to find any audience better diſpoſed to liſten and believe, with the exception only of Captain Mildred, whoſe coldneſs he imputed to envy. He began, therefore, and told ſome of the moſt extraordinary adventures that ever were heard:—how he once, with his ſingle arm, defended ſeveral officers of dragoons from the inſults of an enraged populace, whom ſome of them had offended, juſt for throwing an old woman over a bridge into the river in a frolic.... "The old woman, (ſaid he), ſwam like a cork, and was taken out not a bit the worſe. My friend, Ned Whatley, as honeſt a fellow as ever lived, gave her a crown, and bid her not make ſuch a d——d yelling, ſince there was no harm done; but there came up a parcel of fiſhwoman and waſhwoman, and the devil knows who, and preſently all the town, tag rag and bob tail, were under arms, and my friends were forced to retreat to the Red Lion,

Lion, and there they ſhut themſelves up in a room, Sir——ſo, preſently up comes the mob, and begins to batter the door, Sir.... Oh! oh!—thinks I—are you there, my good friends? I ſhall have a little converſation with you, gentlemen, in a minute.... So, Sir, out I went among them all, and began to reaſon with them. They hiſſed, however, and began to be very troubleſome, but that I did not mind: I ſeized one of the foremoſt by the collar; damme—(ſays I. I was not in orders then you know)—Damme—(ſays I)—*I'll* make an example of ſome of you. So, Sir, up comes a fellow, ſix feet high, and as ſtrong as Sampſon; but I ſeized him with the other hand, and was going to drag both him and the firſt raſcal into the room, when up comes a great ſtrapping wench with a red hot poker in her hand; ſhe gave me a blow, Sir, upon my head, which cut through a thick hunting hat, Sir, and ſtunned me ſure enough."

"And pray, Hughſon, (ſaid the Captain, with an air of incredulity), what were your friends the officers of horſe doing all this while?"——"Doing?—(anſwered he)——

Doing?—

Doing?—Why—why they were—they were ſhut up in the room; what *could* they do, you know."

The evident fallacy and folly of ſuch a ſtory would not have been tolerated in any other company; but Mildred was too heavy and too indolent to confute or ridicule it; and the reſt were the very humble ſervants of the relator, except Roſalie, who, diſguſted more and more every word he ſpoke, was extremely glad to be relieved from hearing either his compliments or his ſtories; when it was propoſed they ſhould all take a walk to the top of the hill, and that the gentlemen ſhould walk thither with them, and have their horſes led. In the buſtle of their departure, Roſalie left the room as if to get her hat; but having done ſo, ſhe glided away, and paſſing as quickly as ſhe could through a ſmall orchard that lay on the other ſide of the houſe, ſhe went into a copſe that adjoined to it, and was preſently out of hearing the inquiries that ſhe ſuppoſed would be made for her. Perhaps her father and mother might chide her on her return to the houſe; but ſhe had ſo invincible a diſlike to being

being expoſed to the impertinence of Blagham, or the ridiculous ſpeeches of his new friend, that there was nothing ſhe had not rather ſubmit to that temporary ill-humour could inflict, than to be expoſed to ſuch teaſing and diſguſting converſation.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THE copſe into which Roſalie had thrown herſelf, like an affrighted bird, was very extenſive, ſtretching along the edge of the hill, and making a curve as if to let in the few houſes that compoſed the village; it ſpread beyond into a very extenſive wood, and there aſſumed the name of the Hunacres, probably a corruption of hundred acres. It was as wild and almoſt as unfrequented as when the ancient Anderidæ ſought their food amidſt the ſame entangled woods, then overſhadowing the whole country under the hills.

Now, however, there were ſome winding paths through it made to ſolitary farms around, and a nobleman, to whom the greater part of it belonged, had cut ridings from the Downs towards his own houſe in two or three directions, to facilitate the way of the ſportſman. The path along which Roſalie went was ſo intricate, that ſhe forgot how far or whither

whither it carried her, till ſhe found it became duſk, and was ſtopped by arriving at one of theſe ridings or cuts through the wood. She then recollected how far ſhe had wandered from home, and was turning to go back, when three gentlemen on horſeback, followed by two ſervants, came galloping ſo faſt from a turn in this green lane a little beyond her, that they were near her almoſt before ſhe perceived them. The foremoſt of them checking his horſe, and looking at her with ſome ſurpriſe, ſaid to his companions, "Here is a young lady, who, if we are not right, I am ſure will be ſo obliging as to direct us."

Rather wondering than alarmed, Roſalie ſtopped, and the gentleman who had firſt ſpoken, ſaid, politely taking off his hat—"We are going, Madam, to Holmwood Park, which we plainly diſtinguiſhed from the hill, and to which my friend here, *who ought to know*, thought he could lead us by a nearer way than that which we were directed to take; but he now thinks he has taken the wrong turning, and that we are too much to the left. Can you inform us how we can beſt

make

make our way out of the wood? for if we could ſee the houſe again, we could eaſily reach it."

Roſalie was about to anſwer, that the way they were in led directly to a common, which adjoined the Park at Holmwood, when the young man, of whom the inquirer had ſpoken, as one who *ought* to know the way to it, jumped from his horſe, and exclaimed, "I cannot have forgotten you, whatever elſe I have forgotten during two-years abſence. It is Roſalie, my dear playfellow and companion."

"It is indeed, (anſwered ſhe); but, Heavens! Mr. Charles Vyvian, how tall you are grown? Upon my word, I ſhould hardly have recollected you. How is my dear Mrs. Vyvian?—How are your ſiſters?"

The other two gentlemen, ſeeing the dialogue was not likely immediately to end, diſmounted, and were introduced to Roſalie; the one as the nephew of Mrs. Vyvian, Mr. Montalbert, who, after a long reſidence abroad, was come to England for a few months only, on a viſit to the Vyvian family: the other as the Count de Toriani, an Italian nobleman,

nobleman, to whom alſo the Vyvians were the more diſtantly related. So many and ſo rapid were the queſtions that Mr. Charles Vyvian now had to make, that he wholly engroſſed the converſation, and as they ſlowly walked down the green avenue before them, he ſeemed totally to have forgotten whither he was going, or that he had any other buſineſs in the world than to converſe with Roſalie as long as he could. It was now, however, ſo nearly dark, that ſhe thought it would be wrong to proceed any farther.—"I muſt wiſh you a good night, (ſaid ſhe) and make the beſt of my way through the wood home."

"Indeed, but you muſt not think of returning by yourſelf," anſwered Vyvian.—"Harry, (added he, ſpeaking to Montalbert) let us go home with Miſs Leſſington.—Shall we not, Harry?"

Harry anſwered, "With great pleaſure," and the oppoſition of Roſalie was in vain.

"But we need not go down this way, ſurely, (ſaid Vyvian); we may go along the path I ſaw you in, and ſo through your father's

ther's orchard or garden, or ſomething—I am ſure I remember ſuch a way."

Roſalie anſwered, that it was certainly a much ſhorter road, but it was only a foot-path, and that there was a ſtile to paſs.

" Never mind a ſtile, (cried the young man) we will leap our horſes over."

He then led the way into the path, which only allowed two perſons to walk abreaſt. Mr. Montalbert and the Count de Torriani followed; the former murmuring loudly againſt Vyvian's monopoly, and the narrowneſs of the path.

Roſalie expected to have found her father and mother returned from their walk, and in no very pleaſant humour, becauſe ſhe had left them; but, on entering the houſe through the garden, the noiſe ſhe heard in her father's book-room convinced her that the party whom ſhe ſo earneſtly wiſhed to avoid were not gone, but were, on the contrary, ſet in to drinking; an alteration of plan which did not at all ſurpriſe her, when Mr. Blagham and Mr. Hughſon were of the party.

Young Vyvian, whoſe ſole meaning was to ſee her ſafe, was however now compelled in

common

common civility to inquire for her mother and her ſiſters. Mrs. Leſſington, amazed at his ſudden appearance, received him with a mixture of civility and confuſion, for which Roſalie knew not how to account: mingled with this extraordinary expreſſion, there was alſo ſome anger towards her, and ſomething that ſeemed like a diſpoſition to reproach her for having introduced viſitors ſo unexpected.

Mrs. Leſſington expreſſing her ſurpriſe at ſeeing him, when ſhe imagined he was at Cheltenham, or in the North with the reſt of the family, he ſaid, "The Count de Torriani and my conſin Harry, having an inclination to ſee Holmwood, we agreed to make a tour round the Coaſt, to paſs about ten days at Brighthelmſtone, and to make Holmwood in our way back. The Abbé Hayward had notice of our intentions yeſterday, and expects us this evening. We loſt our way ſome how by a blunder of mine, and got down into Hunacre wood, where we had the ſingular good fortune to meet Miſs Roſalie."

To Mrs. Leſſington's inquiry after his mother's health, he ſaid, that his laſt letters ſpoke of her as being rather better. "But

it is (ſaid he) more than ſix weeks ſince I have ſeen her, for ſo long have we been rambling about; and her impatience to have me return is now ſo great, that I ſhall only ſtay one day at Holmwood.—Yet (added he, evidently addreſſing himſelf to Roſalie) I am at this moment more diſpoſed than ever I was in my life to make a longer abode at our old enchanted, but not enchanting caſtle." Roſalie did not ſeem to think any anſwer neceſſary to this, and Mrs. Leſſington put on a look of great gravity and reſerve, but ſaid nothing; and as at that moment Mr. Montalbert did not ſeem to find any thing to ſay, a profound ſilence enſued for a minute, which was interrupted by the noiſy entrance of Mr. Leſſington and his friends. The former being appriſed of the arrival of young Vyvian, came to pay him his compliments; and the others were about to depart, or at leaſt to attempt it, though the whole party, without excepting even the maſter of the houſe, ſeemed to have taken ſuch large potations, that they appeared to be but little in poſſeſſion of their ſenſes. Mr. Leſſington, however, buſtled up to young Vyvian, expreſſing the greateſt delight

in

in meeting him, and, amidſt the confuſion, Mr. Montalbert approached Roſalie, to whom he had yet hardly had an opportunity of ſpeaking, though his eyes had declared how much he wiſhed it. "Do you not recollect me, Miſs Leſſington? (ſaid he, ſpeaking low)—I perfectly remember you, and the days I once paſſed with you at Holmwood made an impreſſion on me that never will be effaced. It has ever appeared to me ſince the very happieſt period of the happy hours of my childhood; for I was then but a boy. It is more, (added he), than eight years ago, and you were then very young."

"You do me too much honour, (anſwered Roſalie); I was, indeed, very young—but (an involuntary ſigh forced its way as ſhe ſpoke) thoſe were my days of unalloyed felicity; it was my golden age, and every ſcene has imprinted itſelf deeply on my memory... Yes! I well remember your coming to Holmwood—with your father, was it not?"

"Yes; and an Italian tutor I recollect, but I dare ſay you do not: that then I could ſpeak very little Engliſh."

" Why, you can't ſpeak much now, Sir, (interrupted a voice from behind Roſalie's chair). I ſuppoſe by your accent, Sir, that you are a foreigner? "

" *You* ſuppoſe, Sir, (ſaid Mr. Montalbert angrily); and pray, Sir, who are you?"

"Me, Sir! (anſwered the Rev. Mr. Hughſon)——Me, Sir!——Why, Sir, my name is Hughſon."

" Well, Sir, (ſaid Montalbert haughtily), whatever name you bear, I ſuppoſe it is not neceſſary for you to make a third in my converſation with this lady." The ſtout, the brave, the magnanimous Hughſon, he who had kept at bay an enraged populace, and protected, with his ſingle arm, a whole corps of officers of dragoons, was, for ſome reaſon or other, appalled by the decided and contemptuous tone taken up by Mr. Montalbert. The effects of liquor vary on different conſtitutions. Some cowards it renders brave, and may, perhaps, render ſome brave men cowards. However that might be, Hughſon attempted no reply; but ſtill, unwilling that this ſtranger ſhould engroſs the

the attention of Roſalie, he determined at leaſt to keep as cloſe to her as he could, and therefore ſquatted down in the window ſeat near her, being in truth not very well able to ſtand.

Montalbert, ſhocked at his vulgarity and impertinence, and having no idea that much ceremony was neceſſary towards a man, whom he ſuppoſed to be a little, dirty, drunken curate, ſpoke in a ſtill lower tone to Roſalie, and what was yet more mortifying, he ſpoke in Italian, while, with open mouth and watery eyes, her unfortunate admirer ſat gaſping and ſtaring behind her totally diſregarded.

Montalbert, as well as Roſalie, had forgotten not only that he was in the room, but that any other perſons were in it but themſelves. From an oblivion ſo pleaſing, however, they were ſoon rouſed by Vyvian who, diſengaging himſelf with great difficulty from the maudling civilities of Mr. Leſſington, who was very drunk and very tedious, came haſtily to Montalbert and told him they muſt go. Vyvian then took Roſalie's hand, and ſighing ſaid, "Alas! how little I have ſeen of you, and *that* only by chance; can I

not come to-morrow to take leave of you, Roſalie? for you know I am going abroad again almoſt immediately, and who knows when we ſhall meet once more. Tell me, Roſalie, do you think I may call here again to-morrow?" Mrs. Leſſington had by this time ſidled up near her daughter, to whom ſhe did not allow time to reply, but, with an air moſt repulſively grave and formal, ſhe ſaid, "I am very ſorry, Mr. Vyvian, it happens ſo, as your time is ſo ſhort; but my daughter is particularly engaged to-morrow. We are all particularly engaged. It is extremely unfortunate indeed; another time I hope we ſhall be more lucky."

This rebuff ſeemed particularly mortifying to Vyvian. He bowed coldly to the mother, and then, gently preſſing the hand of Roſalie, which he ſtill held, he ſaid in a whiſper, "I *muſt* ſee you again; where are you going to?"—"I do not know, indeed, (anſwered Roſalie), for this is the firſt I have heard of any engagement. I am afraid it is on ſome party with theſe men." She could add no more, for a ſervant informed Mr. Vyvian and the other gentlemen that their

horſes

horſes were brought round. Leſſington again came up, perſecuting them with his civilities; and Mrs. Leſſington very evidently wiſhed them gone. It became impoſſible for either Vyvian or Montalbert to ſpeak to Roſalie apart, though they appeared equally to deſire it, and with reluctance, that neither could conceal, they left the houſe.

Blagham was no longer in a ſituation to be troubleſome, and Miſs Catharine, ſomewhat aſhamed of the figure he made, had prevailed upon him to leave the room..... Hughſon, however, to whom the departure of the ſtrangers ſeemed to have reſtored his conſequence, failed not to liſten eagerly to the remarks Mrs. Leſſington and Miſs Catharine made upon them. "I ſhould not have known Mr. Charles Vyvian, (ſaid the latter). How very tall he is."

"He is tall, indeed, (replied her mother); but you may ſee he is a mere boy. That young man, would you believe it, Mr. Hughſon, is hardly ſeventeen? He is the ſon of Mr. Vyvian, you know, of Holmwood, with whoſe lady I uſed to be ſo intimate. My daughter *Roſe* uſed to live there a good deal

when ſhe was a child, and this young man looks upon her as one of the family."—— Hughſon, checking a hickup which had nearly broken the ſentence, cried, "Indeed!—really!—nothing to be ſure can be more natural."

"Pray, Ma'am, (ſaid Miſs Catharine), who is that other gentleman; I don't mean the foreign Count, but the other Engliſh gentleman? He is a remarkable handſome man."

"I am ſurpriſed dear Miſs Kitty ſhould think ſo, (ſputtered Hughſon). To my fancy now, he does not look at all like an Engliſhman—not the leaſt."

"Why, certainly, (replied Mrs. Leſſington), he can hardly be called an Engliſhman; for, in the firſt place, his mother was a foreign lady, and, though his father is an Engliſhman, he has lived chiefly abroad, and this gentleman has never been in England above half a year at a time, though they have a very fine ſeat in the North of England, and a great fortune in the family."

"He ſeems to be a very proud man, (ſaid Hughſon). I believe I half affronted him, though I am ſure I don't know what I ſaid."

"I be-

" I believe, indeed, that you did not, (ſaid Roſalie), and you will pardon me, Mr. Hughſon, if I ſay that you ſeemed to intend to affront him."

Hughſon, who had no clear idea of what he *had* ſaid, would have taken her hand, but ſhe ſnatched it away and haſtened out of the room. Soon after ſhe had the ſatisfaction of hearing the whole party leave the houſe, and ſcamper away with a degree of raſhneſs which ſhe thought muſt make her ſiſter uneaſy for the ſafety of her lover.

Roſalie, whoſe ſpirits were fatigued by the events of the afternoon, could not, however, compoſe herſelf to ſleep. The ſight of Charles Vyvian had recalled all thoſe ſcenes which ſhe had vainly been trying to forget, and to think of with leſs concern: and his manners, but ſtill more thoſe of his relation, Mr. Montalbert, formed ſo decided a contraſt to thoſe of the perſons with whom it was now her lot to be aſſociated, that ſhe found ſhe ſhould, by continually making the compariſon, be rendered more uneaſy than ever. She ſaw too, by her mother's manner, that ſhe would yet have to undergo ſome ſe-

vere reproofs for having brought Charles Vyvian and his two companions home with her; and though it was eaſy to account for their appearance, which it muſt be known was merely in conſequence of accidentally meeting her, yet ſhe knew that the circumſtance of her ſo abruptly quitting company, in which it was her father's wiſh that ſhe ſhould remain, would bring upon her reproaches that ſhe ſhould not ſoon or eaſily appeaſe.

The next day verified her apprehenſions. Her father ordered her to attend him in his ſtudy at an early hour of the morning, as he was going out. She entered dejectedly. Her mother was there, and both looked coolly upon her, as they bade her ſhut the door and ſit down. Mr. Leſſington thus began:

"Roſe, it is fit and right that you ſhould know that you have extremely diſpleaſed me."

"I am extremely ſorry for it, Sir. It was by no means my intention."

"You think then, perhaps, that it is not improper to ſlight my friends, and ſhew that you deſpiſe them—gentlemen whoſe notice

does

does you ſo much honour, and whoſe good opinion perhaps may be ſo material to you. Do you conſider, girl, that you have no fortune? That a clergyman's income dies with him? That it is your buſineſs to endeavour to procure an eſtabliſhment, inſtead of affecting theſe fine romantic airs?"

"I affected no airs, Sir—I obeyed your commands, and made tea for the gentlemen—I did not know you wiſhed me to remain with them afterwards, eſpecially as you muſt have perceived that they were not in a ſituation in which they could be pleaſant company for women."

"Prudiſh airs!—Were not your mother and your ſiſters with you? and do you think I would have aſked either them or you to ſtay in improper company?—Let me hear no more of all this, but liſten to what I have to ſay to you:—Mr. Hughſon is a young man of fortune; he is, in his family, his ſituation, and proſpects, every way unexceptionable: he ſeemed to take particular notice of you, notwithſtanding your rudeneſs to him. I expect, if this partiality on his part ſhould go any farther, that you will diſpoſe yourſelf

to receive him as a man to whom it would be agreeable to me, and highly honourable and advantageous to you, to be allied."

Roſalie was about to anſwer, but her father, riſing and leaving the room, ſaid, with yet more ſternneſs, "I will have no anſwer, unleſs it be an anſwer of compliance." Then, turning to Mrs. Leſſington, he added, "your will not fail to enforce what I have ſaid, and to impreſs on the mind of this young woman, that, though ſhe has hitherto found me an indulgent father, I know how to make myſelf be obeyed."——He then left the room, and Mrs. Leſſington ſaid, "You ſee, Roſe, that your father is peremptory. If Mr. Hughſon.....

"Dear Madam, (ſaid Roſalie), what occaſion can there be for all theſe menaces of anger, if I do not liſten to Mr. Hughſon, when it is not even known whether Mr. Hughſon will ever think of me again?"

"Perhaps your father has reaſons, with which he may not think proper to acquaint you, why he knows Mr. Hughſon means to addreſs you."

"Very

"Very certainly, Madam, Mr. Hughſon could not communicate to my father what he could not know himſelf laſt night; for ſo far from being capable of thinking what he intended for the future, he knew not what he was about then: but, admitting it to be ſo, why muſt I be compelled to liſten to him? Indeed, my dear Mama, this Mr. Hughſon is a man it is utterly impoſſible for me to like."

"It would be ſomething new, Roſe, and altogether unlike the heroines whoſe adventures you have ſtudied, if you ſhould happen to like the man recommended to you by your friends, and in every reſpect eligible. Do not think of doing a thing ſo entirely out of rule, but contrive to take a liking not only to ſome other man, but, if poſſible, to the *very man* to whom of all others it is him poſſible you can ever be united."

Roſalie bluſhed deeply, without exactly knowing why. "Dear Madam, (ſaid ſhe), what a ſtrange thing that is to ſay?"

"As ſtrange as true, (replied Mrs. Leſſington). Its truth, I am much afraid, will be

too ſoon verified; but have a care, I promiſe you not only that nobody will defend you in this *dangerous abſurdity*, but that it will be the certain means of eſtranging from you thoſe friends who love you beſt.....
I won't be interrupted, (added ſhe, ſeeing her daughter was going to ſpeak), I won't be interrupted—hear me, and tell me afterwards, whether you who have nothing, you who muſt go into ſome humble buſineſs, or even, perhaps, to ſervice, if your father ſhould die, have any ſort of pretenſions to pleaſing yourſelf, even if *the people you fancy you prefer* were indeed ſo fooliſhly inconſiſtent as to think for a moment of committing ſuch a folly as taking you out of the rank you are in, which, you may be aſſured, child, never entered *their heads*, whatever your vanity and your ignorance of the world may have put into yours."

"For God's ſake, my dear mother! (ſaid Roſalie, with tears in her eyes), what do you mean? This is the firſt time you ever talked to me in this manner! How I have deſerved it now I am entirely ignorant. Did I ever

I ever ſay I like any particular perſon?—or———"

"Pho! pho! (cried Mrs. Leſſington, interrupting her), you cannot deceive *me*; but let me earneſtly exhort you, Roſalie, never to think of the perſons to whom you know I allude, but to determine to follow, like a reaſonable woman, the advice of thoſe who know better what is fit for you than you do yourſelf."

Roſalie remained ſilent. Her ſoul abhorred the idea of receiving Hughſon as a lover, nor could ſhe endure that her mother ſhould for a moment believe her capable of heſitating about him. The converſation ſhe had held, however, was ſo new, and ſo ſtrange, that ſhe had not courage to defend herſelf; and, after a ſhort pauſe, Mrs. Leſſington thus went on:—

"Did you ever know any woman who married juſt according to their own romantic whims in ſetting out in life?——Did I do it, do you think?——Did Mrs. Vyvian?"

"Of

" Of you, Madam, (ſaid Roſalie), I cannot pretend to ſpeak. Mrs. Vyvian certainly did *not* marry Mr. Vyvian from choice; but has ſhe been happy?—has not her whole life been embittered by the ſacrifice ſhe made, as I have heard, to her father's commands?"

" That was very different, (ſaid Mrs. Leſſington). My friend was--------" She ſtopped, as ſhe had often done before when their converſation had been led to the ſame topic, and then immediately changing it, ſaid, " But you now know my opinion, and your father's commands. We are going to-day where you will again be in company with Mr. Hughſon, and it is expected of you, that you will behave to him as to a friend of your father's, and a gentleman whoſe partiality does you honour."

" Whither am I to go, Madam?" ſaid Roſalie in a dejected tone.

" To Chicheſter, (replied her mother dryly)..... We dine with Mr. Blagham; his

his uncle is to be there with ſome other friends; your ſiſter Catharine's ſettlement is to be ſigned; afterwards a party of friends dine with him on veniſon, and we ſhall remain there all night, perhaps go to the aſſembly the night after: you will, therefore, put up a ſmall packet of clothes, and act accordingly."

From the manner in which this was ſaid, Roſalie knew that no remonſtrance againſt an expedition ſo very irkſome to her would be liſtened to; and that, however hateful to her, ſhe muſt obey. She retired, therefore, with an heavy heart to her own room, and began to dreſs and to prepare for the party.

But her mother's oblique reproaches had made a great impreſſion on her mind: ſhe imagined they muſt allude to Mr. Charles Vyvian, or Mr. Montalbert; but probably the former, as her mother could hardly ſuſpect her of a partiality for a man ſhe had not ſeen ſince ſhe was ten or eleven years old. In regard to Mr. Vyvian her heart acquitted her; but ſhe was

at the ſame time conſcious that nothing could do ſo great a diſſervice to Hughſon, in *her* opinion, as putting him a moment in compariſon with ſuch a man as Montalbert.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

ROSALIE was ſoon ready to proceed on an expedition, from which ſhe found no pretence would excuſe her. She mounted her ſiſter Catharine's poney with reluctance; her father, mother, and Miſs Leſſington, were in the poſt chaiſe; the other ſiſter was alſo on horſeback; and it did not add much to Roſalie's proſpect for the day, that this was her ſiſter Maria who had been put out of humour the preceding evening by the unfortunate and undeſired preference Hughſon had ſhewn Roſalie; and who, now ſullen and pouting, endeavoured to ſhew her ſiſter that ſhe had not forgotten the mortification.

They had aſcended and were riding along the hill, but the morning being hot and ſultry, Roſalie turned her horſe towards its

its edge, where began a wood that ſhaded one ſide of it, and the aſh and beech afforded a temporary ſkreen; ſeveral roads wound up the hill from the villages below, and as Roſalie was croſſing one of theſe ſhe ſaw Montalbert ſuddenly appear, who, approaching her with the common ſalutation of the morning, rode along by her ſide without noticing the reſt of the party.

Roſalie, conſcious that this would give great offence to her father and mother, and unwilling to increaſe the diſlike they ſeemed already to have taken to him from the little attention he ſhewed to them the preceding evening, inquired if he would not ſpeak to them?

"Bye and bye, (ſaid he coldly); but, good God, is it never poſſible to have a moment's converſation with you?—I have a great reſpect for Mr. and Mrs. Leſſington, becauſe they are ſo nearly related to you, but you know I have not the pleaſure of being acquainted with them."

There

There was ſomething of peculiar dejection in the manner of Montalbert as he ſpoke.

"You are not well?" ſaid Roſalie.

"Not very well, (replied he); but the hot weather of England never agrees with me. There is ſomething ſtrangely oppreſſive in it. I don't know whether it is that which has affected poor Charles; but, I aſſure you, he is ſeriouſly ill—ſo ill, that we do not think of going to-morrow. The Count, being obliged to be in London, left us this morning, as it was uncertain when Charles would be well enough."

"I am very ſorry, (ſaid Roſalie with quickneſs), it will ſo diſtreſs my dear Mrs. Vyvian!—Has he ſent for any advice?"

"It were well worth while to be ill, (ſaid Montalbert), were one ſure of exciting intereſt ſo tender."—"But you do not anſwer me, (ſaid Roſalie, affecting not to hear him). Has Mr. Vyvian ſent for Mr. Harriſon, the apothecary?"

"I be-

"I believe Mr. Hayward intended it, (replied Montalbert), for the poor old man was frightened out of his wits. Charles, however, oppoſed it. Perhaps it will be nothing. But you know that his mother has nurſed him to death; and that Hayward is as timid as an old woman about him."

"I am very uneaſy, (ſaid Roſalie, pauſing a moment). I think I had better tell my mother; ſhe would ſurely ſee Mr. Vyvian, as ſhe knows how very wretched her friend would be ſhould her ſon be ill at a diſtance from her." Thus ſaying, and without waiting for an anſwer, ſhe rode towards the chaiſe and bade the driver ſtop. Montalbert did not go with her, but followed the chaiſe at ſome diſtance.

"Well?—(ſaid Mrs. Leffington ſharply, as the chaiſe ſtopped)—and what now?"

"Dear Madam, (anſwered Roſalie in viſible conſternation), here is Mr. Montalbert, whom I have met by accident, who tells me that Mr. Charles Vyvian is taken very ill?"

"Well?—

" Well?—(cried Mrs. Leſſington impatiently)—and what would you have us do?"

" I thought, Madam, (ſaid Roſalie, deeply bluſhing and ſpeaking quick), I thought you might be alarmed on account of your friend Mrs. Vyvian, and might—might———"

" I don't ſee what *we* can do, my dear, (ſaid Mr. Leſſington). Probably Mr. Hayward has taken proper care of the young gentleman.—I ſuppoſe, (added he, addreſſing himſelf to Roſalie), ſince Mr. Montalbert came hither by *accident*, that Mr. Charles has not ſent any meſſage expreſſing a wiſh to ſee your mother?"

" No, Sir," anſwered Roſalie.

" Well then, child, there is *no call* for our interference: I wiſh him better with all my heart. Roſe, you keep up with the chaiſe—Andrew, drive on, we ſhall be late."

Andrew obeyed, and Montalbert, who had very ſlowly rode on while this conference laſted, ſtopped, as the chaiſe paſſed, and

and made a formal bow to the perſons in it, but without ſhewing any intention to ſpeak to them. He then rejoined Roſalie, and continued to ride the pace ſhe did forty or fifty yards behind the chaiſe, complaining of the perverſeneſs of his fate, in her being to ſtay perhaps ſeveral days at Chicheſter; while ſhe, in her turn, expreſſed very great uneaſineſs about Mr. Vyvian, and ſeemed to attend very little to the unequivocal expreſſions Montalbert uſed to impreſs her with an idea of his own attachment to her. At length they came into the turnpike road. Roſalie ſaw her father look out repeatedly, as if inquiring with angry countenance, whether Montalbert had left her, which ſhe now entreated him to do. He ſighed deeply, and ſaid, in a mournful tone, "And ſo you are going to that town, and do not return perhaps theſe two or three days, and before that time we ſhall have left the country, and I ſhall ſee you no more."

This idea, which ſeemed ſo diſtreſſing to him, was by no means the pleaſanteſt

that

that could be preſented to the imagination of Roſalie. Her heart ſeemed to re-echo, "I ſhall ſee him no more!" But ſhe attempted to ſmile, and to anſwer cheerfully, "O yes—I am perſuaded we ſhall meet again."—"But when? or where? (cried Montalbert, fixing his eyes earneſtly on her face). Alas! Miſs Leſſington, *I* ſhall ſoon leave England; and this, perhaps, is the laſt time we ſhall meet!"

"I ſhould be *ſo* ſorry to believe that, (anſwered ſhe, heſitating and bluſhing), that I will not ſtay to hear it repeated..... Adieu, Sir; fail not to aſſure your friend of my ſincere wiſhes for his recovery; and tell my dear venerable friend, the Abbé Hayward, how much I lament that we never meet as we uſed to do."

Mr. Leſſington, now putting his head once more out of the window, waved his hand impatiently for his daughter to keep up with them. Roſalie underſtood the ſignal but too well, and though reluctantly, put her horſe into a gallop, while Montalbert checked his more reluctantly ſtill; but, as he

he was on a riſing ground, he remained in the ſame place, following with his eyes the object from which he was ſo unwilling to part, till a wood, into which the road turned, concealed her from his ſight.

Roſalie, in the mean time, proceeded with an heavier heart than ſhe knew how to account for. The illneſs of Charles Vyvian, which alarmed her not only on his own account, but on that of his mother, and the certainty that ſhe ſhould be compelled to paſs two or three days among perſons ſo extremely diſagreeable to her, were indeed reaſons enough for chagrin; but the concern ſhe felt was ſomething deeper than belonged to either of theſe. That ſhe had ſeen Montalbert for the laſt time, ſhe could not think of without the moſt acute uneaſineſs; and ſo much did that idea dwell on her mind, that ſhe arrived at the end of her journey hardly knowing how ſhe got there: nor was ſhe rouſed from the indulgence of theſe painful reflections, till the troubleſome aſſiduities of Hughſon reſtored her to herſelf, by impoſing

impoſing on her the neceſſity of repreſſing his impertinence; which ſhe did, however, with an aſperity ſo unuſual to her, that her mother ſeverely reproved her the moment they were alone. "Dear Madam, (ſaid Roſalie), that man is ſo utterly diſagreeable to me: he is ſo forward, ſo ignorant——" "It is a misfortune to you, child, (anſwered her mother gravely), that you have lived in a ſtyle, and among people who have given you a diſtaſte for thoſe of your own rank. However that may be, (added ſhe, with ſtill greater ſolemnity), I repeat to you, Roſalie, that you are expected by your father to behave to Mr. Hughſon not only as to his particular friend, but as to one whom, if you ſhould be lucky enough to procure him for an huſband, would eſtabliſh you in poſſeſſion of a fortune much greater than you ever can have the leaſt right to expect."—"I had rather dedicate my whole life to the moſt humiliating poverty, Madam, (anſwered Roſalie with ſpirit); I had rather not only go to ſervice, but ſubmit to the moſt laborious

offices, even to work in the fields, than condemn myſelf to become the wife of Mr. Hughſon."

"Very fine, indeed, (ſaid Mrs. Leſſington), very romantic, and very ſublime. But hear me, Miſs Roſe: if you are weak, wicked, and vain enough to think, for a moment, of that ſimple young man Charles Vyvian, which I fear, I greatly fear, that proud coxcomb Montalbert has been putting in your head, know that the moſt remote hint given of any ſuch——ſuch an abſurd and——and ridiculous idea, ſent to my friend Mrs. Vyvian, would not only put an eternal bar between you, but would for ever rule you in her good opinion."

"I think of Mr. Charles Vyvian, Madam, (ſaid Roſalie), no otherwiſe than as the ſon of my dear benefactreſs!—No, indeed, my dear Mama, I never was quite ſo abſurd as to have any other idea."

"Take care you never are then, (replied her mother), and be not ſo blind to your own intereſt, as to deaf to the dictates of

of common ſenſe, as to throw away, by refuſing Mr. Hughſon, an opportunity that may never offer again." Then, perceiving her daughter was about to anſwer her, ſhe added, "Let us have no more romance, Roſalie, it will anſwer no purpoſe, but to irritate your father without changing his reſolution. You will dreſs for dinner. To-morrow there is to be an aſſembly; it is already ſettled that we are to go; and, as it is the firſt time you have been ſeen there, I deſire you will look as well as you can."

"Gracious Heaven! (exclaimed Roſalie, as ſoon as her mother had left her), I am thus to be dreſſed up, and offered like an animal to ſale; and my mother ſeems to think it a matter of courſe..... Oh! Montalbert, how different are your manners from thoſe of the people I am condemned to live among!—Dear and amiable patroneſs of my happy infancy, little did you imagine, when you were ſo tenderly kind to your unfortunate Roſalie, that you were laying up for her future

years inſupportable mortification!—Had I never been bleſſed in your ſociety, had I never known thoſe who are related to you, I ſhould not now be perpetually making compariſons ſo much to the diſadvantage of perſons among whom it is my lot to live, and I ſhould then have been as happy as my ſiſters."

Very heavily for Roſalie paſſed the day. Mr. Hughſon was ſometimes extremely troubleſome; but finding her ſtill cold and repulſive, he now and then tried what could be effected by changing his battery, and affecting to neglect her for her ſiſter, who, in her turn, put on a diſdainful air, in evident reſentment of the preference he had lately ſhewn Roſalie, who ſo little deſired it.

It was not, however, in the eyes of Hughſon that ſhe appeared the faireſt of the rural nymphs from 'under the hills.' Others of Mr. Hughſon's acquaintance, who were of their evening party, made the ſame diſcovery, and two of them attempt-

ed,

ed, during the afternoon, to engage her for the ball of the enſuing evening. She refuſed them both civilly, but poſitively.

" Aye, (ſaid one of them, in a whiſper), I ſee how it is—Hughſon is the happy man; is it not ſo, Miſs Roſe?"

" If you mean, Sir, (anſwered ſhe coldly), that Mr. Hughſon's happineſs is to ariſe from dancing with me to-morrow, I aſſure you, you are miſtaken."

" What, you are not engaged to him then?"

" No, Sir; nor ſhall I engage myſelf to any body."

" Hey!—(cried Hughſon, riſing and ſkipping acroſs the room)—Hey!—what's all that?—who talks of engagements?—Hey!—why, I hope, Miſs Roſalie, nobody has been pretending to take away my partner; ſurely you underſtand, Ma'am, that you are engaged to me?"

" Indeed, Sir, I do not, (replied Roſalie), and I ſhould be ſorry you underſtood it."

 " There!—

"There!—(cried one of the young men who came from a provincial town in another county),—there! I have ſtill a chance. Sir, (added he, addreſſing himſelf very ſolemnly to Hughſon), I'll tell you what is a rule with us—that is with our ladies—and you know what excellent, genteel, faſhionable meetings we have at ———. Sir, it is a rule among the ladies of ——— never to engage themſelves to a gentleman in a black coat, while they have a chance of being aſked by any other, and damme if I don't think they're in the right."

"*You* think, Sir, (ſaid Hughſon, colouring violently and trembling with paſſion; and pray, Sir—I ſay—Sir, that is—was there any queſtion aſked as to what you, Sir, think, Sir?"

"I beg, (ſaid Roſalie, who had no inclination to have a quarrel begin between theſe two coats of different colours on her account), I beg that the converſation may drop; I have no intention, Mr. Hughſon, of dancing at all."

"Oh!

"Oh! (cried the young man, his opponent), the whole room will riſe, by G—, againſt ſuch an inhuman reſolution..... No, no, that will never be allowed.—Here, Blagham, before you ſit down to cards, you dog you, come and ſet this matter to rights for us."

"I beg leave to retire from the diſcuſſion then, Sir, (ſaid Roſalie riſing), though I cannot imagine how either you, or Mr. Blagham, can be intereſted in a matter ſo immaterial to you both."

"Eh! (cried Blagham)—why, my Roſe of beauty, you have all your thorns about you to-night. Aye! aye! Sir, thus it is—thus it is—thus do theſe imperious little divinities treat us till they are married... Why now, there's my Kitty as great a tyrant as that little lioneſs her ſiſter; but you ſee ſhe begins to look tame and demure already. Come, come, Miſs Roſe, frowns do not become the fair, child."—He was proceeding in the ſame ſtyle, when, her patience being entirely exhauſted, ſhe

ſnatched away her hand, which Blagham endeavoured to hold, and left the room.

Before ſhe returned the card tables were adjuſted, and Mr. and Mrs. Leſſington, who dearly loved a game at whiſt, were ſettled with Blagham, who really had, and Hughſon who fancied he had, great ſkill in the game. Roſalie, therefore, ſeeing her too perſecutors employed, and her father and mother deeply engaged, took out her work and ſat down behind Mrs. Leſſington, as much out of ſight as poſſible: but this peaceful ſtate ſhe was not long ſuffered to enjoy. The idle man who remained inſiſted on making a party for a round table, and with whatever reluctance Roſalie was compelled to join them, and to be liſtening for three mortal hours to the ſad attempts at wit which a commerce table never fails to produce.

At length, however, the evening ended; and for Roſalie the following arrived but too ſoon.

Dragged

Dragged to a ſcene, where ſhe conſidered herſelf expoſed as an animal in a market to the remarks and purchaſe of the beſt bidder, it was with extreme reluctance that Roſalie entered the ball-room; nor had ſhe by any means taken that pains to add to the attractions of her perſon which her mother had inſiſted upon. The ſimpleſt and neateſt muſlin dreſs, without feathers, flowers, or ribbands, was all ſhe put on; while her ſiſter Maria came down as ſhowy and blooming as ribbands and rouge could make her.

Mrs. Leſſington would have reproved her youngeſt daughter for having thus neglected her admonitions; but, when ſhe ſaw the three together, ſhe could not help being ſenſible that Roſalie looked like a girl of faſhion, while Catharine and Maria had the appearance of people dreſſed for the performance of ſtrolling plays, with all the finery the property man could furniſh. Without any remonſtrance, therefore, ſhe was ſuffered to go with the reſt; but not ſo eaſily did ſhe eſcape from the renewed

importunities of Mr. Hughſon to dance with him, who having engaged her father to interfere in his favour, ſhe received ſo peremptory an order to accept him, accompanied by looks ſo angry and menacing, that ſhe was compelled, though with extreme reluctance, to ſubmit. Her ſiſter on the point of being married was of courſe taken out by her lover, but by ſome mortifying fatality Miſs Maria was unaſked; and the firſt dance was nearly ended, when, to the extreme ſurpriſe of Roſalie, who with her ſkipping partner was arrived at the bottom, ſhe ſaw (almoſt doubting the information of her eyes) her ſiſter Maria ſtanding up with Montalbert.

The change of her countenance, when it was her turn to take hands with him, expreſſed more forcibly than words could have done her aſtoniſhment. Montalbert perceived it. "You rather wonder to ſee me here?" ſaid he.—"Wonder! (cried ſhe)—Good Heavens!—and your friend, how does he do?—He is certainly better ſince you could leave him." The

figure

figure of the dance now obliged them to ſeparate; but in a few moments declining to go down the dance, which was ſoon after over, Montalbert ſeated himſelf by her, taking without any ſcruple the place of her partner, whom ſhe ſent away for ſome negus. "You inquire after my friend, (ſaid Montalbert), with an intereſt ſo tender, that, however I may envy his happineſs in exciting that intereſt, it becomes me to ſatisfy your inquiries: yet you might, perhaps, obtain more ſatisfactory information from himſelf."

"From himſelf! (cried Roſalie eagerly); is he here then?"

"Alas! (anſwered Montalbert, again deeply ſighing), he ſeems inſenſible of the good fortune which I would purchaſe with worlds, if I poſſeſſed them, for there he is converſing with Lady ———, and Lady Anne ———, at the other end of the room. Shall I go and tell him, Madam, (added he coolly), that you deſire to ſee him?"

" By no means, (replied Roſalie), by no means—not for the world!"

" Inſenſible fellow! (cried Montalbert), whom rank can a moment detain from Miſs Roſalie Leffington. Ah! if he ſaw with my eyes—if his heart felt as mine does!"——

" I am very glad, however, (ſaid ſhe, affecting not to underſtand this), I am extremely glad to find Mr. Charles Vyvian ſo much recovered; I was quite alarmed at his threatened illneſs on account of his mother."

" On account of his mother!" repeated Montalbert.

" Yes, Sir, (ſaid Roſalie gravely), certainly on account of his mother."

At this moment two perſons of very different deſcription approached them.... Hughſon came ſmirking and prancing with a glaſs of negus, and began telling how he had mixed it after a manner peculiar to himſelf; but ſeeing that Roſalie gave no attention to him, and that Montalbert made

no

no offer to reſign the place he had uſurped, he remained looking even leſs wiſe than ordinary, till his diſmay was increaſed by the appearance of Vyvian, who, putting him on one ſide with very little ceremony, entered into converſation with Roſalie, who expreſſed as warmly as ſhe felt it the pleaſure his recovery gave her. She loved Charles Vyvian exactly as ſhe loved her brothers: brought up with him from her childhood, ſhe had never conſidered him for a moment in any other light, nor did ſhe ſuppoſe it poſſible, notwithſtanding what her mother had ſaid, that any other perſon could entertain an idea of his having for her any other attachment than that which might ſubſiſt between a brother and a ſiſter. Vyvian was fourteen months younger than ſhe was, and nothing could, in her apprehenſion, be more abſurd than to ſuppoſe Vyvian, not yet eighteen, would ſee her in any other light than ſhe thought of him. This gave to her manner towards him an eaſe which ſhe was far from feeling when ſhe converſed with Montalbert; and

and now, without any heſitation, or indeed any apprehenſion of impropriety, ſhe roſe from her ſeat, and walked with him to the end of the room, Montalbert taking his place in ſilence on the other ſide, while the luckleſs Hughſon drank up himſelf what he had fetched for his partner, and then went with a rueful countenance to find at the ſideboard below ſomething more powerful to diſſipate the chagrin he felt, as well as the aukward ſenſations of conſcious inferiority. Roſalie, in the mean time, not thinking about him, was inquiring of Charles Vyvian why he prolonged his ſtay in the country, when he was well enough to go? "I thought, (ſaid ſhe), I thought you told me, that Mrs. Vyvian did not even know of your intentions of being at Holmwood. If ſhe ſhould hear of your remaining there on account of illneſs, 'tis ſo far from advice, I cannot imagine why you ſtay."

"What would you think, (replied he in a low whiſper, as if he was ſolicitous that his couſin might not hear him)—what would

would you think, Roſalie, if I were to tell you, that I went thither in the hope of ſeeing you; that I linger here for no other reaſon than becauſe I cannot prevail upon myſelf to quit the country where you are?"

"I ſhould think, (ſaid Roſalie heſitating), and I ſhould ſay, that I was very ſorry Mr. Charles Vyvian ſhould talk ſo wildly and improperly - - -

I am ſure ſhe does not wiſh to be left out of this dance."

Hughſon then, endeavouring to ſmile and ſmirk in order to conceal the extreme vexation he felt, advanced to take her hand; but, from ſome unuſual courage which at that moment ſhe felt, ſome ſudden impulſe for which ſhe could hardly account, and which ſhe afterwards thought blameable, ſhe ſnatched away the hand Hughſon would have taken, and telling him diſdainfully that ſhe did not know that ſhe ſhould dance any more, ſhe turned to the ſeat ſhe had before occupied, whither Vyvian, wholly regardleſs of the evident anger of Mrs. Leſſington, followed her.

Hughſon, ſwelling with rage and reſentment, which he had, however, no means of ſatisfying, now ſeemed to give up the point in abſolute deſpair; but, accuſtomed as he had been to fancy that ſo clever a little fellow, with his fortune and expectations, might have his choice among the young

young women of a whole county, he could not repreſs the mortification he felt. The plan that Montalbert had adopted of dancing with Maria Leſſington, in order to obtain the opportunity of converſing with her ſiſter, had been ſo far from anſwering, that it had entirely baffled his purpoſe.....He now ſaw himſelf engaged for the evening, and prevented from enjoying a moment's converſation with Roſalie, while his more fortunate couſin was happy enough wholly to engroſs her attention.

Montalbert, however, who had ſeen too much of the world to be eaſily diverted from his deſign, made a falſe ſtep as he was going down the dance that was now begun, and proteſting he had hurt himſelf ſo as to make his going on impoſſible, was limping to a ſeat; but ſeizing on poor Hughſon in his way, he cried, "My good Sir, I perceive your fair partner declines dancing any more; I am, moſt unfortunately for myſelf, diſabled—It will be happy for

you,

you, for you will have the pleaſure of taking one lovely ſiſter inſtead of the other."

Hughſon, clever fellow as he thought himſelf, was ſo over-awed by the eaſy manners and conſcious ſuperiority of Montalbert, that he had nothing to ſay, but advancing towards Miſs Maria, as if this was an arrangement to which he was under the neceſſity of ſubmitting, they ſullenly finiſhed the dance together; while Montalbert, availing himſelf of the ſucceſs of his ſtratagem, ſeated himſelf on the other ſide of Roſalie, who, however unwilling to diſoblige her mother, forgot in a few moments that ſhe was likely to do ſo, while ſhe attended ſometimes to Vyvian as to a brother whom ſhe loved, or as to a very young man whoſe wild ſallies were pardonable; but to Montalbert ſhe liſtened with ſenſations very different: ſhe knew far leſs how to repreſs the oblique declarations he made to her—declarations which ſhe trembled to liſten

to,

to, while ſhe felt conſcious, though not daring to own it to herſelf, that all the future happineſs of her days depended on their ſincerity.

Mrs. Leſſington had retired to cards after her laſt ſharp remonſtrance to her daughter, and the eagerneſs with which ſhe always purſued her game, kept her in another room for ſome time. At length, however, ſhe was either put out of the game by rotation, or ſome evil-diſpoſed perſons had whiſpered to her what was paſſing among the dancers; for about an hour and an half after her laſt rebuke ſhe returned to the ball-room, and, in a voice and manner more angry than before, told Roſalie that ſhe was going home, and ſhould take her thither at the ſame time. "As to your ſiſters, (added ſhe, laying great emphaſis on her words), as *they* know better how to behave, I need not interrupt their amuſement——*they* ſhall ſtay as long as they pleaſe."

Rejoiced

Rejoiced to be releaſed on any terms from a repetition of reproaches in a public room, ſhe aſſured her mother that ſhe was quite ready to attend her. "Very well, Miſs, (replied Mrs. Leſſington)—it is mighty well..... Come, Sir, (continued ſhe, turning to Charles Vyvian), as we are old acquaintance, you know, you ſhall favour me with your arm——but ſtop——I muſt beg that you will firſt be ſo good as to accompany me to the top of the room, I muſt ſpeak to Catharine and Maria."—Without waiting for an anſwer from Vyvian, ſhe took his arm, and led him away.

"My bleſſings on your dear Mama! (ſaid Montalbert, ſmiling half maliciouſly)—how kind ſhe is to me—but the moments are precious—tell me, I do beſeech you, Roſalie, is it impoſſible for me to ſee you again before I leave this country—before I leave England—for years!"

"How is it poſſible?" anſwered Roſalie, hardly knowing what ſhe ſaid.

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" It would be poſſible, (replied he), if you would only try to oblige me."

" O no! no! (cried ſhe with quickneſs), pray do not think of it; it would be utterly improper if it were not impoſſible."

" Do you riſe early? (ſaid Montalbert, diſregarding this faint repulſe)—Do you never walk before breakfaſt?"

" Why will you aſk?" anſwered Roſalie.

" Becauſe, as I ſhall certainly quit Holmwood Houſe after to-morrow—as I cannot again importune you—as I ſhall probably—ah! too probably—never ſee you again, let me entreat you only to ſee me for one half hour before I go?"

" I cannot indeed, Sir! (anſwered ſhe). To what end would you aſk, what I am ſure you would think it very wrong were I to grant?"

" But if I am in the neighbourhood of your houſe, early on the morning after to-

to-morrow, I might have a chance of ſaying adieu for the laſt time?"

Roſalie did not reply, for her mother was by this time returned, and ſharply bidding her follow, went haſtily to the hired chaiſe that waited for them.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

VERY bitter were the reproaches which Roſalie was compelled to hear during their way home. She bore them with patience and ſilence, conſcious perhaps that they were not wholly unmerited; ſhe was, indeed, willing enough to acknowledge that ſhe ſhould not ſo rudely have repulſed Hughſon in poſitive diſobedience of her father's commands; but why her mother ſhould make her converſation with Charles Vyvian ſo great a crime, ſhe could not imagine, ſince in fact ſhe had ſhewn a much greater diſpoſition to converſe with his couſin than with him, and was perfectly conſcious that ſhe gave him no other preference than what aroſe from the long intimacy, that being ſo much together in childhood, had created between them.....

On

On this converſation, however, it was that Mrs. Leſſington dwelt with acrimonious repetition—proteſting to her daughter, that if Mrs. Vyvian were acquainted with the impropriety, folly, and diſobedience ſhe had been guilty of, that her favour would be forfeited for ever.

After liſtening to ſuch ſharp reproaches, intermingled with many aſſurances of the anger and reſentment of both her parents, unleſs ſhe behaved in a very different manner to Mr. Hughſon, Roſalie obtained with ſome difficulty leave to retire, when the image of Montalbert was the only one that ſhe found reſted forcibly on her mind: his converſation made a deeper impreſſion the more ſhe reflected on it. Montalbert was not only the moſt elegant and agreeable man ſhe had ever converſed with, but he appeared to her to be the moſt unlikely man in the world to amuſe himſelf with the cruel, yet too frequent folly of making profeſſions that mean nothing. Montalbert therefore loved her. An idea ſo ſoothing acquired new power to charm her

her in proportion as ſhe reflected on all he had ſaid, and the manner in which he ſaid it. How fortunate would be her deſtiny, ſhould ſhe become the wife of ſuch a man, and how was it poſſible that her mother, who muſt ſee the marked preference he gave her, could heſitate a moment between him and ſuch a man as Hughſon. It was true Mr. Montalbert was a Catholic, but of what conſequence was that?—Was not her mother's earlieſt and beſt friend of the ſame perſuaſion?—Such were ſome of the contemplations which engroſſed the thoughts of Roſalie, and, fatigued as ſhe was, kept her from repoſe till ſhe heard the whole party return. Loud mirth, which echoed throughout the houſe, declared the joyous hearts of the company. Roſalie particularly diſtinguiſhed the boiſterous laugh and horſe-play of Blagham, and the ideot-like chuckle of Hughſon. Roſalie delighted to have eſcaped this concluſion to the evening, and fearing that her ſiſter, who ſhared her bed for that night, might either be elated with

the amuſements of the latter part of the evening, or not yet have recovered of the ill-humour ſhe had felt at the beginning of it as to enter into converſation with her, either to teſtify her pleaſure or vent her ill-humour, Roſalie affected to be aſleep. The next morning was fixed for their return home.

At breakfaſt every body affected to reſent to Roſalie what had paſſed the evening before; and while Mr. Leſſington regarded her with evident marks of diſpleaſure, and would not ſpeak to her, while her mother, ſtill more angry, talked at her, and encouraged Blagham, in his ſtrictures on the company who were at the aſſembly, to ridicule the two travelled men, who were, he ſaid, the greateſt coxcombs he ever recollected to have ſeen——to which Blagham very warmly aſſented, adding, at the ſame time a look of reſentment at Roſalie, as if to ſay, "Yes you, Miſs, perverſe child, are to me!"

"For my part, ſaid Blagham, by the Lord, if I had a ſiſter who ſhould ſuch

Franchiſed

Frenchified chaps to honeſt Heart of Oak Engliſhmen, why I ſend her off to be a Signora or Mademoiſelle among them—I ſhould think ſuch a bad taſte a diſgrace to my family. To be ſure, in regard to theſe two fine gentlemen, they being Papiſts is reaſon enough for *their* being educated among your Seniors and Monſeers; but what the uſe is of ſending our young nobility and gentry to learn a parcel of uſeleſs coxcombry amongſt them, I never could diſcover; and I own, Sir, (addreſſing himſelf to Mr. Leſſington), that when I conſider this matter, I cannot but think that the Legiſlature of our three kingdoms ought to interfere."

Before Mr. Leſſington, who never ſpoke without due conſideration and emphaſis, could return an anſwer, Miſs Maria ſaid, "Oh! there they go!"

"Who go?" inquired her mother.

"My ſiſter Roſe's great and fine friends, (anſwered Maria), Mr. Vyvian and Mr. ———, I forget his name, that very fineſt of all fine men."

Roſalie, who had ſeen them as well as her ſiſter, could not help bluſhing. Montalbert had looked earneſtly in as he paſſed, and checked his horſe a moment when he perceived he had caught her eye.

" I hope, (ſaid Mrs. Leſſington auſterely), that Mr. Vyvian is returning immediately to his mother, who is extremely ill, who knows nothing of his being here, and who would be extremely unhappy were ſhe to be informed of it. It was but the day before yeſterday he was ill in bed, (added ſhe, caſting a ſignificant glance at her youngeſt daughter), and laſt night he was at a ball."

" He did not dance, however, Madam, (ſaid Roſalie), and I underſtood came hither only to conſult a phyſician."

" Who informed *you* of all this, Ma'am, (anſwered her mother), and why do *you* take upon you to anſwer for him ?"

Roſalie, whoſe conſcience was perfectly clear in regard to Vyvian, anſwered calmly, " He told me ſo himſelf, Madam, and I an-

I anſwered, becauſe I thought your converſation addreſſed particularly to me."

"Humph—(ſaid Mrs. Leſſington contemptuouſly)—ſilence, child, would often become you much better."

The other young ladies had a great deal to do in the town, for Miſs Catharine was now to be married in three days. Mantuamakers and milliners were therefore to be hurried, and, as ſoon as breakfaſt was over, they went out together for that purpoſe, attended by Blagham and Hughſon, while Roſalie remained where ſhe was, having no ambition to accompany them; her preparations for her ſiſter's wedding were confined, (as it was intended that Maria only ſhould accompany the bride), and about theſe ſhe was by no means ſolicitous.

Diſagreeable and uneaſy to her as the remonſtrances and reproaches were that ſhe was ſtill obliged to hear, ſhe flattered herſelf that one good effect would ariſe from the circumſtances of the preceding evening—that Hughſon, convinced of its

inefficacy, would carry his ſuit no farther, and that his pride would prevent her being teazed with addreſſes, which her ſiſter ſeemed diſpoſed to receive favourably.

But in this hope ſhe was diſappointed. The admiration Roſalie had ſo univerſally excited, while her ſiſter had been hardly noticed, the whiſpers of approbation that he had heard from the moſt faſhionable ſet in the room, for whoſe opinion the whole country around had the moſt implicit deference, as well as the impreſſion ſhe ſeemed to have made on Vyvian and Montalbert, were altogether circumſtances ſo far from deterring Hughſon from purſuing her, that they ſerved only to inflame his ambition; and, though he affected to direct his attention towards Miſs Maria for a while, in hopes of piqueing Roſalie, he ſoon renewed thoſe expreſſions of affection and proteſtations of unwearied perſeverance, from which Roſalie foreſaw ſo much perſecution and trouble.

As Hughſon was to perform the marriage ceremony between his friend Blagham and

and Miſs Kitty Leſſington, he went back with the family, and by his troubleſome aſſiduities, and ridiculous attempts at gaiety and wit, deprived her of the ſatisfaction ſhe would have derived from having left a place ſo very diſagreeable to her as the provincial town where they had paſſed the laſt three days..... At home ſhe at leaſt hoped to enjoy the ſolitude of her own room, but ſhe dared not aſk herſelf, whether ſhe ought to venture the meeting Montalbert had ſo earneſtly ſolicited..... She felt all its impropriety; then endeavoured to reconcile herſelf to a ſtep from which ſhe thought no evil conſequence could poſſibly ariſe. "My mother, (ſaid ſhe, arguing this point with herſelf), my mother will never forgive me, ſhould ſhe know it—but how will ſhe know it?—and what real harm is there in it?—It would certainly have a bad appearance, were a young woman known to have private meetings with any one—but what *meetings* can I have?—Is not Mr. Montalbert immediately going back to Italy, and is there

any probablity of my ever ſeeing him again?—Ah! no."—The argument concluded with a deep ſigh, but it had not helped to determine her from an almoſt intuitive ſenſe of propriety, for ſhe had received but little inſtruction on ſuch matters; ſhe was conſcious that ſhe ought not to go out with a view of meeting Montalbert: yet to think that ſhe had ſeen him for the laſt time, to let him go with impreſſions of her having a predilection in favour of ſuch a man as Hughſon, of her being happy among ſuch ſociety as ſhe was condemned to, it was impoſſible to determine on it. Sleep the enſuing night was driven from the pillow of Roſalie by theſe debates; but it was at this ſeaſon, long before day appeared with its firſt dawn, however, ſhe left her bed, for it would very ſoon be neceſſary to determine whether ſhe would venture to commit ſuch an impropriety as meeting Montalbert, or ſuffer him to depart under the impreſſions he would carry with him, if ſhe ſaw him no more.

His

His dejection when he ſpoke of immediately leaving England, his reſpectful manners, the warm and lively affection he ſeemed to have for her, the advantageous light in which his honourable addreſſes appeared to her, all contributed to diſpoſe her to meet him; againſt it there was only that internal ſenſe of prudence, (which, like the voice of conſcience, could not be entirely ſtifled), and the fear of offending her mother. Yet why ſhould her mother be offended?—Conſidered in every way, whether as to fortune, rank of life, family, or proſpects, there could, ſhe thought, be no compariſon between Montalbert and Hughſon; and if to have her married well was the wiſh of her parents, why ſhould they be angry at her not declining an acquaintance which ſeemed likely to end in an eſtabliſhment above their hopes. There was ſome truth, but more ſophiſtry, in the arguments ſhe uſed with herſelf to conquer her remaining apprehenſions; when, having determined to venture, ſince it could be but for once, ſhe left the houſe,

beat ſo violently that ſhe leaned againſt the ſtyle that in one place divided the wood. "Whither am I going? (ſaid ſhe); to meet a man, who till a week ſince was a ſtranger to me! How am I ſure that he will not deſpiſe me for this eaſy compliance; perhaps I ſhall forfeit his good opinion—perhaps—ſurely it were better to retreat." There was, however, no longer time to heſitate, for at the end of the path before her Montalbert appeared. He ſprang forward eagerly the moment he ſaw her—"This is very good, deareſt Miſs Leffington, (cried he); how infinitely I am obliged to you!"

"And now, (ſaid Roſalie, collecting all her reſolution), let me not riſk my mother's diſpleaſure by ſtaying long; but receive, Sir—receive my ſincere good wiſhes for your health and happineſs, and ſuffer me to bid you adieu!"

"Good Heavens! (replied he), and will you already leave me?—No, Roſalie, our time is precious, and I will not throw it away in a profuſion of words: I love you,

and am ſenſible that on you alone depends the happineſs of my future life. I will not, however, deceive you: I am a younger brother; and though the fortune of my family is very conſiderable, much of my expectations depend on my mother, who is a native of another country, who has hardly ever been in England, and who diſlikes the cuſtoms, the manners, and, above all, the religion of this; with a great number of prejudices, which contribute but little to the happineſs of her family, nor, I fear, to her own; ſhe has, however, always been to me an affectionate, if not a tender mother, and it would be equally ungrateful and impolitic, were I to act in abſolute defiance of her known wiſhes. Yet, ſurely, a medium may be found—without incurring her diſpleaſure, I may eſcape the miſery of reſigning the only woman I ever ſaw, with whom I wiſh to paſs my whole life."

"I do not ſee how, (anſwered Roſalie, trembling and faltering). No, Sir; however flattered I may be by your good opinion,

opinion, I entreat you to think of me no more, otherwiſe than as a friend. The obſtacles between us are inſurmountable, and-------"

"Not if you do not make them ſo, Roſalie, (interrupted he). Hear me with patience: Though you may think my mother's known averſion to my marrying an Engliſh woman and a Proteſtant, together with the ſtate of my fortune, ſufficient reaſons for refuſing immediately to unite your deſtiny with mine—yet ſurely you need not therefore refuſe to remove the fear, the tormenting fear, of loſing you, by promiſing that you will not give yourſelf to another, at leaſt till I have attempted to conquer the obſtacles that oppoſe my happineſs. O Roſalie! if you had any idea of the agonies I feel, when I think that while I return to Italy in the hope of finding a remedy againſt the perverſeneſs of my deſtiny, the object of my affections may be the wife of another—even of this Hughſon, on whom it ſeems

to

to be the reſolution of your family to throw you away."

"If it be any ſatisfaction to you, Sir, (ſaid Roſalie in a low voice), to know that Mr. Hughſon can never be more to me than a common acquaintance, I moſt poſitively aſſure you of it."

"I am perſuaded you think ſo now, (anſwered Montalbert with vivacity); but who ſhall aſſure me, Roſalie, that you can always reſiſt the importunities, the commands of your father; family convenience, and what is called the voice of prudence, and all thoſe motives that may be urged to enforce your obedience? Beſides, if you ſhould have reſolution enough to diſmiſs this man, how many others are there who may have the ſame pretenſions? No, nothing can give me a moment's peace, unleſs you promiſe me, lovelieſt of creatures, that you will await my return from Italy—that you will then be mine, if the obſtacles now between us can be removed."

"On

" On ſo ſhort an acquaintance, can I, ought I, to promiſe this?" replied Roſalie with increaſed emotion. She then, though in broken ſentences, and in a faint and low voice, urged all the reaſons there were againſt her forming ſuch an engagement; but Montalbert found means to convince her of their fallacy one by one, till at length he extorted from her the promiſe he demanded. He inſiſted on being allowed to cut off a lock of her hair, and on her taking a miniature of himſelf which he drew from his pocket, and which he owned had been drawn in London for his mother. He then told her that he ſhould write to her, and that ſhe muſt find ſome means of their ſecurely correſponding. This Roſalie declared was quite impoſſible; but while he was preſſing her to reflect farther, a loud voice was heard in the part of the wood adjoining to the orchard, calling on Roſalie. Terror now ſeized her. " It is my father, (ſaid ſhe). If he finds you with me, what ſhall I not ſuffer!—

ſuffer!—leave me—leave, me for Heaven's ſake!"

"You terrify yourſelf needleſsly; it may only be a ſervant ſent to ſeek you."

"And why to ſeek me, (replied ſhe), if there was no ſuſpicion of my being improperly abſent? It is not uſual for them to inquire or call after me."

Montalbert now ſaw her ſo affected with apprehenſion, that he would not longer detain her; but kiſſing her hand, and preſſing it a moment to his boſom, he told her he would find the means of writing to her, and diſappeared, while Roſalie, endeavouring to recollect and compoſe herſelf, took the path that led towards home.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

HAD it indeed been Mr. Leſſington himſelf, who had thus loudly ſummoned his daughter to return home, it would have been difficult for her to have concealed from him the agitation of her mind, notwithſtanding her utmoſt endeavours to compoſe herſelf; but it was only Abraham, a ſervant who was occaſionally bailiff, coachman, footman, groom, or whatever was wanted in the family, who, approaching her out of breath, cried, "Lord, Miſs, I've been ever ſo long looking a'ter you.... Why, here a been all on em looking for your coming; for what d'ye think?"

"Indeed, I don't know," replied Roſalie, breathleſs, and terrified at this preamble.

"Ah!

"Ah! Miſs—Miſs!—you can't gueſs whoſe come?"

"No! no! Abraham—do pray tell me?"

"I've a good mind not, for your giving me ſuch a dance after you. (Abraham had ſeen her grow up from infancy, and was no obſerver of forms). However, I'll tell you for once: 'tis both our young maſters; 'tis Mr. William from Oxford, and Mr. Francis from London—both—both on um be comed to be preſent at the wedding, and a rare time we ſhall all on us have on't I warrant too."

"I am very glad, indeed, (ſaid Roſalie, relieved from a thouſand apprehenſions of ſhe knew not what). I thought my brother William would not be here till to-morrow, and as for Frank, I did not know he was expected." She then haſtened into the houſe, and in meeting her brothers, particularly the eldeſt, to whom ſhe was much attached, the embarraſſment of her manner was not remarked, nor was any inquiry made where ſhe had been.

It was not till ſhe retired to dreſs for dinner that ſhe was at liberty to reflect on all that had paſſed with Montalbert. The promiſe ſhe had given ſeemed to be a relief to her ſpirits, when ſhe remembered that it ſhould make her conſider herſelf as betrothed to the only man in the world whom ſhe preferred to all others; that ſhe had now the beſt reaſons in the world to ſtrengthen her reſolution, never to liſten to Hughſon; reaſons, which if ſhe dared plead them, her father himſelf could not diſapprove. She ran over in her mind every look, every ſentence of Montalbert, and ſincerity and tenderneſs ſeemed to dwell upon his tongue. What but real affection could induce him to ſpeak, to act as he had done? and what could be ſo fortunate as her inſpiring ſuch a man with a paſſion ſuch as he profeſſed to feel for her. A conſciouſneſs of attractions, which till very lately ſhe never ſuſpected that ſhe poſſeſſed, gave her a momentary pleaſure; but ſhe felt that thoſe attractions would have

have been without value, had they not ſecured for her the heart of Montalbert.

Soon dreſſed for the day, ſhe ſat in the window of her bed chamber, penſively looking towards the quarter where Holmwood Houſe was ſituated, though ſhe could not diſtinguiſh it. "He is gone! (ſaid ſhe). Already he is on his way to London; in a few days after he arrives there he will leave it—will leave England—the ſea will be between us!" She took out the picture he had given her, and, for the third time ſince it had been in her poſſeſſion, fixed her eyes earneſtly upon it. The candour and integrity of the countenance ſtruck her particularly. "Never, (ſighed ſhe), can the heart that belongs to theſe features be otherwiſe than generous, tender, and ſincere." She was thus feeding the infant paſſion which had taken entire poſſeſſion of her mind, and was loſt in thought, holding the picture ſtill in her hand, when her elder brother opened the door. "Are you dreſſed, Roſalie? (ſaid he),

he), and may I come in?"—"O yes! yes! brother, (anſwered ſhe, hurrying the picture into her pocket), pray come in."

"I have a great deal to ſay to you, my dear Roſe, (ſaid he); come, give me a place in the window by you. You are very much improved, my love, ſince I ſaw you laſt; I don't wonder at the havoc you make; but my mother complains of you, Roſe."

"On what account, my brother? I am ſure I never intentionally offended my mother."

"But ſhe tells me that you have now an opportunity of marrying extremely well, but that from ſome unaccountable perverſeneſs, or unreaſonable prejudice, or perhaps, (added he, fixing his eyes earneſtly on hers), perhaps through ſome unhappy predilection, you drive from you, with contempt and diſdain, a man every way unexceptionable."

"You have ſeen him, brother, (anſwered Roſalie), and can tell whether you think

think him all that my mother has repreſented."

"I have only ſeen him for a moment, and have hardly exchanged ten words with him.- His perſon is neither good nor bad, but ſurely my ſiſter has too much ſenſe to refuſe a man merely becauſe he is not an Adonis."

"But indeed, brother, it is not that. Mr. Hughſon is a man, whom it is impoſſible I can ever like: he is ſilly, noiſy, and conceited; a boaſter, and a ſort of man whom I know will diſpleaſe you when you ſee more of him. I dare ſay his fortune is greater than I have a right to expect; but I never ſaw a man more likely to ſpend a fortune than he is, and I cannot think there is much worldly wiſdom in marrying a man with whom I might enjoy a ſhort affluence, that would only make me feel more ſeverely the indigence he might reduce me to."

"All that is very well, (ſaid William Leſſington); but tell me, Roſalie, what do

do you ſay as to this prepoſſeſſion in favour of another, of which my mother accuſes you?"

"I can ſay nothing, (replied ſhe), becauſe I—becauſe I know that—indeed I do not know who ſhe means."

"Is there no ſuch predilection exiſting then, Roſalie?"

"Not for the perſon my mother thinks of," anſwered ſhe, colouring ſtill higher.

"You allow there is for ſome other then?"

"Not at all—I am ſure I did not ſay any thing like that; but if there were, why, my dear brother, ſhould it of neceſſity be in favour of a perſon who would diſgrace my family?"

"There may be very improper attachments, Roſalie, (replied he very gravely), which may not be diſgraceful in the uſual acceptation of the word: as, for example, if a young woman ſhould be flattered into a partiality for a *boy* of a *different* religion, and in whoſe power it could never be to fulfil any promiſes which a childiſh paſſion might

might induce him to make. (The complection of Roſalie changed to a deeper ſcarlet). I ſee how it is, my ſiſter, (added he), and will now diſtreſs you no farther; but I truſt to your own ſweetneſs and candour to give me an opportunity of diſcuſſing this matter when we are both more at leiſure.....I believe dinner is now ready."

"Before you go, my dear William, (cried Roſalie, recovering herſelf a little), let me aſſure you, that my mother has no grounds whatever for her ſuſpicions, but becauſe Mr. Charles Vyvian has appeared particularly pleaſed at our meeting, and what was more natural? We were brought up together from children. As to myſelf, I certainly did the other night find more pleaſure in talking to my old friend, whoſe mother I love ſo much, and am ſo much obliged to, than in dancing with Hughſon, who is the moſt diſagreeable man in the world to me—perhaps I might be rude to him—I am afraid I was; but why would

would my mother compel me to dance with him?"

"And is *that* all, Roſalie?"

"That is all, upon my honour, (replied ſhe), in regard to Mr. Vyvian."

Young Leſſington, who did not know Montalbert even by name, appeared ſatisfied, and they went down together; when, from the beginning of the dinner, converſation, and the quantity of wine that Hughſon very ſoon ſwallowed, Roſalie flattered herſelf that long before the cloſe of the evening he would do or ſay ſomething that would thoroughly diſguſt her elder brother, and, by convincing him that ſhe was right in refuſing him, procure for her a defence againſt the irkſome importunity of his future addreſſes.

In this ſhe was not miſtaken; before young Leſſington had been two hours in company with Hughſon, he was compelled to own that Roſalie could not be blamed for having kept at a diſtance a man whoſe manners were ſo unpleaſing. The other brother, however, who had ſeen very dif-

ferent company, and whoſe ideas had taken quite another turn, thought of him as he did of himſelf, that he was "a clever, ſprightly, little fellow."

Dinner was hardly over, and the bottle going as briſkly about as it could do before the ladies retired, when Abraham came ſtumbling into the room, and muttered ſomething which nobody underſtood, and, before there was time for inquiry, Mr. Charles Vyvian and Mr. Montalbert entered, to the diſpleaſure of ſome of the company, and to the aſtoniſhment of Roſalie, who, on meeting her brother's eyes, looked ſo confuſed, that all the ſuſpicions Mrs. Leſſington had hinted to him in the morning ſeemed to be confirmed. The reception they received was cold and formal, particularly from Mrs. Leſſington, who gravely expreſſed her ſurpriſe, after what Mr. Vyvian had told her, at his making ſo long a ſtay in the country.

"Oh! (anſwered he), I was ſo unwell yeſterday, that my good old doctor would not hear of my ſetting out to-day; and,

as

as my mother thinks we are ſtill upon the ramble, and will not be uneaſy, I have perſuaded my worthy old Abbé to ſay nothing about it: however, we intend to be good boys, and to go off to-morrow; and, upon my honour, (continued he, riſing and taking her hands), my dear Mrs. Leſſington, I only came to know if you could not give me ſome little commiſſion to my mother, to put her in good humour with her truant boy..... Come—come—I know you will oblige me with a letter—or—you, Madam, perhaps, (turning to one of the other ſiſters)—if not, I am ſure Miſs Roſalie will."

The repulſive gravity with which Mrs. Leſſington anſwered him, was but ill ſeconded by the increaſing confuſion of her daughter, who heſitated, bluſhed, and ſtammered out a few incoherent words; ſymptoms which did not eſcape her brother, who narrowly watched her, and who failed not to impute it all to a very different motive than the real one.

Montalbert, in the mean time, was on thorns; ſurrounded as ſhe was, there was no poſſibility of ſpeaking to her, and he could not bear to leave her without having fixed on ſome means by which they might hear from each other. He recollected that none of her family underſtood Italian: he looked round to ſee if it was likely any one in the room did, and being ſoon convinced he had nothing to apprehend, unleſs it was from the Oxford man, and even with him he thought the chances were much in his favour, he told Roſalie, addreſſing her with great gravity, that ſince he had the pleaſure of ſeeing her, he had recollected the words of the Italian ſong ſhe had mentioned, and that, if ſhe would favour him with a pen and ink in the next room, he would write them out.

At this moment the miſtreſs of the houſe, receiving an hint from her huſband to depart, ſaid, as ſhe roſe from the table, "We will ſend you one down, Sir."—"O no! (replied he), rather let me write it, dear Madam,

Madam, in your apartment; and, Vyvian, as we muſt immediately return home, we will now wiſh Mr. Leſſington and his friends good night." This ſhort ceremony paſſed with great formality on all ſides, and Vyvian and Montalbert following the woman of the family into another room, the latter ſat himſelf down with great ſolemnity to write out his ſong, which having done in the plaineſt Italian he could imagine, but written as if it was in meaſure, he gave it to Roſalie; and Vyvian, who had been talking earneſtly to her the whole time, reluctantly took his leave alſo, and they both departed.

They were hardly out of the room before Mrs. Leſſington, whoſe anger and ſuſpicions were rouſed anew, demanded to ſee the paper Montalbert had given her. Roſalie, not without fear and trembling, delivered it to her. She looked at it a moment, and believing from the manner in which it was written it was really a ſong, gave it her back again, not without evident marks of diſpleaſure, and

many hints of her reſolution to inform Mrs. Vyvian where her ſon was, and of the impropriety of his conduct, if he did not leave the country the next day. Of all this, as Roſalie was not obliged to think it addreſſed to her, ſhe took no notice.

The next day the wedding of her ſecond ſiſter and Mr. Blagham was celebrated. The party were more noiſy and diſagreeable than is even uſual on ſuch occaſions. Hughſon was the moſt drunk, and conſequently the moſt impertinent; and never was an hour ſo welcome to Roſalie as that which took them all away, by the favour of a full moon, and left her alone with her mother.

Till now the tumult, with which ſhe had been ſurrounded, had not allowed her a moment, except thoſe allotted to repoſe, to indulge reflections on what had paſſed. The ſullen calm that ſucceeded was calculated to reſtore her diſſipated and bewildered thoughts. Her mother, buſied in arranging her houſe, left her to herſelf; her father had accompanied the bride and

bridegroom

bridegroom to their houſe, and was afterwards to go on a tour with them into the eaſtern part of the county. It was at once a matter of pleaſure and ſurpriſe to Roſalie, that he had never once propoſed her being of the party, and ſhe remarked that he now appeared much leſs anxious than her mother to promote with her the ſuit of Mr. Hughſon; it ſeemed as if he would have been as well contented that his daughter Maria ſhould enſure this important conqueſt.

Mr. Leſſington was one of thoſe men who have juſt as much underſtanding as enable them to fill, with tolerable decency, their part on the theatre of the world. He loved the conveniences of life, and indulged rather too much in the pleaſures of the table. His leſs fortunate acquaintances (a race of people to whom he was not particularly attached) knew that Mr. Leſſington was not a man to whom the diſtreſſed could apply with any hope of receiving any thing but good advice. Thoſe who were more fortunate had for

be altered *a little* for the better; that nothing would, he knew, be ſo effectual a recommendation to the favour of theſe dignitaries as zeal, in ſtopping even with ruſhes the gaps threatened by ſuch innovators, even before they were viſible to any but the jealous eyes that ſaw, or fancied they ſaw, the whole fence levelled. The proſperity of his family might be conſidered as being in ſome degree the effect of his thus keeping always on the right ſide, for he was reckoned a riſing man, and one who would at no very remote period be promoted to higher dignities. Mr. Blagham had not been entirely without conſiderations of this ſort, when he married a wife with no other portion than her wedding clothes; but Mr. Leſſington had promiſed her ſomething handſome at his death, and there was no doubt in the mind of the lawyer of his ability to fulfil his promiſe.

Mrs. Leſſington and Roſalie had now been at home alone three days. The former

former had ſettled her houſe, and was quietly enjoying the order ſhe had reſtored after all the buſtle they had lately been in; while Roſalie, with mingled emotions of fear, anxiety, and doubt, waited for intelligence from Montalbert.

It was in the evening of the third day, that as ſhe was walking in a ſort of court, that was before the houſe next a road, an horſeman ſtopped, and inquired if this was not the parſonage? On Roſalie's anſwering in the affirmative, he produced a letter, which he ſaid he had been ſent with from Lewes.

The predominant idea in the head of Roſalie being Montalbert, ſhe trembled like a leaf when the man gave her the letter, and, without conſidering whether it was likely her lover ſhould ſend it thus openly, or how it ſhould come from Lewes, ſhe haſtened breathleſs into the houſe to obtain a light to read it by, for it was now nearly dark. In her way to the kitchen ſhe was met by her mother, who ſeeing her extreme agitation, and a letter in her

hand, for ſhe had not had preſence of mind to conceal it, immediately fancied it came from Charles Vyvian, who was always haunting her imagination. In this perſuaſion ſhe took it from her daughter, and carrying it immediately to a candle, found—not a billet-deux to Roſalie, but intelligence of a very different nature—it was a letter from Mr. Blagham, informing her, after a ſhort preface, that Mr. Leſſington died that morning in an apopleƈtic fit.

Though nothing was more likely than ſuch an event, from the form and manner of life of her huſband, it had never once occurred to her as poſſible. The ſhock, therefore, was great, and the widow's grief not a little increaſed by the reflection, that their income ariſing from church preferment was at an end.

Roſalie felt as ſhe ought on the loſs of a parent; but as it was more to the purpoſe to endeavour to aſſuage her mother's ſorrow than to indulge her own, ſhe gave her whole attention to that purpoſe. Mrs. Leſſington

Leſſington was too reaſonable to be a very inconſolable widow, and in a few hours was in a condition to conſider what ought to be done, which Roſalie ſet about executing, by writing to Mr. Blagham, and giving ſuch orders as her mother thought neceſſary.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

IT is not neceſſary to relate all that paſſed in the Leſſington family, till the period when all its members were aſſembled to hear his will read. It was then found that he had given his widow, for her life, a third of all he poſſeſſed, which amounted in the whole to about eight thouſand pounds, and divided the reſt among his children, to each of whom he allotted a certain portion to be paid at a certain time, except to Roſalie, whoſe name was not even mentioned in the will.

All expreſſed their ſurpriſe at this except Mrs. Leſſington, who ſaid nothing in anſwer to their exclamations of wonder. Roſalie, indifferent as to fortune, of which ſhe knew not the want or the value, was no otherwiſe grieved at this ſtrange omiſ-

ſion,

ſion, than as it proved her father's total want of affection for her—a conviction that coſt her many tears; nor were thoſe tears dried by the remark ſhe made on the behaviour of her ſiſters and her younger brother, who all ſeemed pleaſed, though they affected concern. The behaviour of her elder brother, however, would have given her comfort, could ſhe have conquered the painful idea, that her father had thrown her off as a ſtranger to his blood. As ſoon as the funeral was over, her brother William took occaſion to talk to her alone. "Be not ſo dejected, my dear Roſalie, (ſaid he); unpromiſing as your proſpects appear, you have at leaſt the conſolation of knowing that you have always a friend in me, who will never forſake you."

"You are too good, deareſt William, (replied the weeping mourner); but do not imagine that it is the want of my ſhare of my father's little property that grieves me—no; if he had but *named* me with kindneſs, I ſhould not have been ſo unhappy;

happy; but when I think that he muſt certainly have died in anger with me, that either from my ſeeming to refuſe Mr. Hughſon, or ſome other cauſe, he was irritated againſt me."

"If you reflect a moment, my ſweet ſiſter, on the date of the will, you will ſee that this could not be. The will is dated above three years ſince, when the very exiſtence of ſuch a man as Hughſon was unknown to him, when you were only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, when you had been more with Mrs. Vyvion than at home, and when it was every way impoſſible that you could have given him the leaſt offence; I rather think that this ſtrange circumſtance aroſe from the opinion he entertained, that Mrs. Vyvian would provide for you."

"How could my father think that, (ſaid Roſalie), when he muſt have known that Mrs. Vyvian, notwithſtanding the large fortune ſhe brought, has not even the power to hire or diſcharge a ſervant, and is hardly allowed enough yearly to appear

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as her rank requires, leaſt, as her croſs tyrant of an huſband ſays, ſhe ſhould ſquander his fortune on begging friars and mummers of her own religion? She had, indeed, a ſettlement of her own, but I heard him reproach her with having diſpoſed of it in ſome ſuch way; but, however that may be, my father muſt know that it was not in her power to do any thing for me. Of late too, he muſt have thought that it was not her wiſh, for ſhe has appeared almoſt entirely to have forgotten me."

"There is, however, no other way of accounting for the circumſtance, and the more I reflect on it the more I am perſuaded that this is the truth."

Roſalie, though far from being convinced by the reaſoning of her brother, was conſoled by his tenderneſs, and by degrees regained her ſerenity, which was, however, again diſturbed by a letter from Montalbert, in which he renewed all the profeſſions he had made on their parting; told her he had continued to poſtpone his

journey

journey to Italy for ſome time longer, and had done ſo only in the hope of ſeeing her again.

He did not ſeem to have heard of her father's death. She knew that her being left deſtitute of fortune would make no alteration whatever in his affection; the little ſhe would in any caſe have poſſeſſed could never indeed have been any object to him, even if fortune had ever once been in his thoughts. She wrote to him, therefore, of what had happened; and without affecting to deny the partiality ſhe felt for him, and lamenting the little probability of their meeting properly, ſubmitted it to him, whether it would not be more prudent to forbear meeting at all till there was leſs danger of offending her mother. She told him, that of the future deſtination of the family ſhe knew nothing; but that, from what ſhe could learn, her mother had ſome thoughts of taking a ſmall houſe in or near London, when the period came on which ſhe muſt quit their preſent habitation.

Roſalie now found herſelf for a while relieved from the irkſome importunities of Hughſon, who was obliged to be abſent. Her mother too ſeemed to have relaxed a good deal in the earneſtneſs ſhe had formerly ſhewn on this ſubject, and had not her extreme uncertainty, in regard to Montalbert, been a conſtant ſource of anxiety, ſhe would at this period have taſted of more tranquillity than had long fallen to her ſhare.

Sometimes when her brother William, who continued at home, was either inſtructing her as the kindeſt tutor, or amuſing her as the tendereſt friend, her heart reproached her for her inſincerity towards ſuch a brother, and ſhe was half tempted to relate to him her engagement with Montalbert; but when ſhe had nearly argued herſelf into a reſolution of doing this, her natural timidity checked her: ſhe recollected how material it was to her lover that their engagements ſhould remain a ſecret; and ſhe was beſides deterred by the fear that her brother would,

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from education and principle, in all probability, ſtrenuouſly oppoſe her becoming the wife of a Catholic.

But naturally ingenuous and candid, it was impoſſible for her ſo well to diſſimulate, but that Mr. Leſſington ſaw there was ſomething more on her mind than ſhe ever ventured to expreſs. The impreſſion that his mother had given him of ſome attachment between her and young Vyvian frequently returned to his recollection, though he thought it could be only a childiſh paſſion on the part of Vyvian, who would think no more of it after he left England, he dreaded leaſt the ſpirits and health of Roſalie might ſuffer, as he had ſeen ſo often happen to young women, who had been incautiouſly led into liſtening to vows and promiſes that were meant by the men that made them only as the amuſement of an idle hour.

In his frequent converſations with his ſiſter, therefore, and intermingled with leſſons he ſometimes gave her, he [illegible] opportunities continually to hint at the

the weakneſs and danger of attending to ſuch ſort of profeſſions; while, at other times, he took notice to ſay, how generally unfortunate marriages turned out to be where the parties were of different religions, giving Mr. and Mrs. Vyvian as an example immediately within their own knowledge. On theſe occaſions he fixed his eyes on thoſe of Roſalie, and, ſure that he meant more than he expreſſed, her countenance betrayed her conſciouſneſs; for whatever her brother ſaid, when he remotely alluded to Vyvian, was equally applicable to Montalbert, and whatever reſolutions ſhe ſometimes made, when ſhe was alone, to avow ingenuouſly the truth, theſe hints entirely deprived her of the courage ſhe had been thus trying to obtain.

Montalbert, who by means of a ſervant at Holmwood Houſe, on whoſe fidelity he could depend, continued to write to her and to receive her letters, became now impatient to learn where was to be her

her future reſidence. As this ſeemed ſtill uncertain, he implored leave to come down incog. to the neighbourhood of Holmwood; than which, he ſaid, nothing was more eaſy, as he could be concealed in the houſe of a farmer, a tenant of Mr. Vyvian's, who, being a Catholic, was entirely devoted to his ſervice, and of an integrity on which he could rely. Roſalie, however, extremely alarmed at ſuch a propoſal, urged ſo many reaſons why it ſhould not be executed, and aſſured him it would make her ſo extremely miſerable, that he, for that time, conſented to relinquiſh it, which he conſented to with leſs reluctance, when ſhe informed him, that within a few days her mother had talked in more poſitive terms of their immediate removal to London, or to its neighbourhood; that her brother was gone to look for a houſe for them, and ſhe thought it extremely probable, from the impatience her mother expreſſed, that they ſhould there begin the new year. Roſalie was

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at a loſs to comprehend by what means Montalbert prolonged his ſtay in England ſo much beyond the time, when he had told her, his mother expected his return to Naples, where ſhe generally reſided; this ſurpriſed her ſtill more, when ſhe found by part of a letter from Mrs. Vyvian, which Mrs. Leſſington read to her, that Charles Vyvian was already gone. The ſentences of the letter which her mother choſe to communicate ran thus:—

"I have determined, in order to be near Dr. W——, without reſiding immediately in London, to take an houſe at Hampſtead, and my upholſterer informs me he has found one that anſwers my deſcription. Mr. Vyvian has, in his cold way, aſſented to my engaging it, taking care, however, to let me underſtand, at the ſame time, that he thought my not being well or able to live in London was a mere whim, and that the air of Hampſtead was not at all better than at his houſe in Park Lane, or even ſo good. Till now I did not know he had taken an houſe

houſe in Park Lane, inſtead of that in Brook Street; but, alas! my dear old friend, there are many other reaſons, beſides the difference of the air, that will make me adhere to my intention of going to Hampſtead. It is an unpleaſant circumſtance ſurely to be a cypher in one's own houſe, and ſuch I am become; now that my ſon, my dear Charles, is gone, I feel that there is nobody here that is at all attentive to me. The Miſs Vyvians, young as they are, are introduced into the world by their father, or their father's friends: the countenance of a mother ſeems not neceſſary to them; they are fumed, I believe, with ſpirits to enjoy all the pleaſures of gay life, and ſeem to fear, from me, that interruption which certainly it is not my intention to give them. The eldeſt, though not yet ſixteen, her father thinks of marrying to a man of high rank, with whom ſhe got acquainted while ſhe was with her father's ſiſter in Yorkſhire. He has not, however, the title to which he is to ſucceed; but his uncle, whoſe heir

heir he is, is old and without children, and having ſome political connection, I know not what, with Mr. Vyvian, it is by them that this union is propoſed, while the mother of the young man, who has an immenſe fortune in her own diſpoſal, has hitherto ſhewn a diſinclination to the match, in the perſuaſion that my daughter is ſtill a Catholic. I have learned theſe particulars from perſons who are in their confidence, which I am not, and I eaſily comprehend that this intended connection adds a ſtrong reaſon to many others why the father and the daughter would be quite as well pleaſed if we ſaw no more of each other, during the winter, than we have done for theſe two laſt ſummers. Do not, however, grieve for me, my dear Catharine; you know my ſufferings, and you know how I am enabled to bear them. From Mr. Vyvian why ſhould I expect kindneſs? I am thankful that my lot is not yet more bitter than it is. It would be a great pleaſure to me, ſhould your affairs allow you to ſettle in the neigh-

bourhood where I have determined, for the preſent, to fix my reſidence. I am, as you well know, no great judge of ſuch matters; but, I believe, from all the inquiries I have been able to make, that you would not, in point of œconomy, find the difference ſo great between living near London and in a country town as you may perhaps imagine; at leaſt not to a family, which would not, I imagine, enter much into the card-playing ſocieties of the village, but would live a good deal retired, though, conſidering your two unmarried daughters, you could not, perhaps, be quite ſuch a recluſe as I ſhall be, who, except my nephew Montalbert, whoſe ſtay, however, in England will not be long, ſhall probably live for weeks together without ſeeing any body but my confeſſor."

"The reſt of the letter, (ſaid Mrs. Leſſington, as ſhe put it into her pocket), is of condolence, and ſo forth, on Mr. Leſſington's death."

"And

"And is there no other mention of me in it?" ſaid Roſalie.

"No, not any other, (anſwered her mother coldly); but what, does that make you ſigh?"

"Indeed it does, Ma'am, (anſwered ſhe); for how can I help lamenting that Mrs. Vyvian, who uſed to love me ſo, ſeems, and indeed has long ſeemed, entirely to forget me."

"O, when ſhe ſees you again, ſhe will recollect her former partiality for you. You know that my friend is ſo wrapped up in a particular ſet of notions, and ſuch an enthuſiaſt in her religion, that ſhe thinks it a very wrong thing to be much attached to any body, and endeavours to wean herſelf from all affections that may prevent her giving up her whole heart to God; and really, conſidering the way in which her family treat her, I really think it is extremely fortunate that her tender heart and weak ſpirits have taken that turn; otherwiſe to be treated, poor

dear woman, as ſhe is, to have ſuch a huſband, and ſuch children, would certainly break her heart."

"Though her daughters, (ſaid Roſalie gravely), are certainly very unlike what ſhe could wiſh them, I believe her ſon is dutiful and affectionate—I never ſaw any thing wrong in him."

"*You* never ſaw, (repeated her mother)—I dare ſay—it is very becoming in *you*, to be ſure, Roſalie, to enter on his defence. I wiſh I may be miſtaken, but I am much afraid that her ſon will no more contribute to her happineſs than her daughters: however, the boy is gone now, thank God, and at leaſt will not give her the *ſort* of uneaſineſs ſhe would have felt, could ſhe have known of his behaviour while he was here."

"What behaviour, dear Madam?" ſaid Roſalie, who wiſhed to know the extent of her mother's ſuſpicions.

"What behaviour—why, did he not talk a great deal of nonſenſe to you?—

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Did he not pretend to make love to you?"

"No, upon my word, (anſwered ſhe); he ſaid a great many civil things, and fooliſh things, if you pleaſe to call them ſo, but nothing that was at all like making love to me."

Mrs. Leſſington then put an end to the converſation, by ſaying, that as he was now gone abroad for ſome years, it did not much ſignify what boyiſh nonſenſe he had talked, ſince it had gone no further; and Roſalie left her, well pleaſed to find from what ſhe had ſaid that her intention of removing her family to Hampſtead was confirmed by this letter from her old friend, and that ſhe meant almoſt immediately to put it in execution.

In a fortnight afterwards, all their arrangements being made, they departed for ever from a part of the country where Mrs. Leſſington had reſided above ſeven and twenty years, or rather from her na-

tive country, for ſhe was born not far from Holmwood Houſe. She left it, however, with much leſs regret than people uſually feel on quitting a ſpot to which they have long been habituated. Miſs Maria—or, to ſpeak more properly, Miſs Leſſington, for ſhe was now the eldeſt unmarried ſiſter, was pleaſed with a change which offered her a proſpect of ſeeing London, where ſhe had never been for more than two or three days.

The Abbé Hayward, diſmiſſed by Mr. Vyvian from Holmwood, had now left that venerable edifice to ſervants. The way of the Leſſington family to the next poſt-town lay through the park; as Roſalie paſſed this ſcene of her former happineſs, a thouſand mournful thoughts crowded on her recollection, but ſhe conſoled herſelf with the thoughts of being ſoon near Mrs. Vyvian, and that ſhe was going where, ſince Charles Vyvian could no longer be there to alarm the vigilance

vigilance of her mother, ſhe hoped to be allowed the innocent pleaſure of converſing with Montalbert, without the neceſſity of contrivances that ſhe felt to be unworthy of both.

CHAP. VIII.

MRS. Vyvian arrived at the houſe ſhe had taken at Hampſtead a few days after the family of Mrs. Leſſington had become inhabitants of that village. The deſcription of the firſt meeting between her and her old friend may be given beſt in Roſalie's own words to Montalbert; whom, it was agreed, ſhould not appear immediately on their arrival. "At length I have ſeen her, my friend—this dear Mrs. Vyvian—ſo nearly related to you, and therefore dear to me—the firſt and beſt friend of my childhood; for I never recollect having received ſo many proofs of affection from my mother as from her..... Ah! Montalbert, how is ſhe changed ſince I ſaw her laſt; yet it is but a little while, *not* yet two years; but trouble, as ſhe

ſaid with a melancholy yet ſweet ſmile, makes greater havoc in the conſtitution than time. I do not know, Montalbert, whether it is her being ſo nearly related to you, or the memory of her paſt kindneſs, or both, but to me there is an attraction about Mrs. Vyvian that I never was conſcious of in any other perſon. The eminent beauty ſhe once poſſeſſed is gone, and its ruins only remain, but the delicacy, the faded lovelineſs of her whole form, is, perhaps, more intereſting than the moſt animated bloom of youth and health. She had not ſpirits for the firſt two days after her arrival to receive us all. My mother only was admitted to ſee her. Yeſterday, however, my ſiſter and I were allowed to attend her at an early hour of the afternoon. Maria was going to the play with a family who live here, who are diſtantly related to the huſband of one of my ſiſters, and who imagined, and perhaps not without reaſon, that to make parties for us to viſit public places is the firſt kindneſs they can ſhew to ſome of the

family. Only Maria, however, accepted this invitation, for I had hopes of paſſing the evening with Mrs. Vyvian; a pleaſſure I would not have exchanged for the moſt brilliant ſpectacle that London offers.

" How can Mr. Vyvian treat this charming woman with coldneſs, even with cruelty, as I am afraid he does, though my mother ſays ſhe never complains?—How is it poſſible that her daughters can neglect her?—Were I her daughter, I think it would be the greateſt happineſs of my life to watch her very wiſhes before ſhe could expreſs them, and to relieve that languor which always ſeems to hang over her ſpirits, and cloud the brilliancy of an underſtanding naturally ſo good. But I have heard, Montalbert, ſhe was compelled to reſign the man to whom ſhe was attached, and to marry Mr. Vyvian, who, though he knew her reluctance, was determined to perſevere. Strange that there can be found a human being ſo ſelfiſh as to act thus, and then treat with cruelty the victim

tim whom he has thus forced into his power. I hope I ſhall never again ſee this man, for I feel ſuch an antipathy to him that it would really be painful to me. As to the young ladies, I find they are frequently to viſit their mother, but I ſhall avoid them as much as poſſible, for they are ſo much changed ſince we played together as children of the ſame family, that there is no longer any affection probably between us—I ſhall be deſpiſed as the daughter of a country curate; and though, I hope, I am not proud, I do not love to be deſpiſed:..... Ah! Montalbert, it is your partiality that has, perhaps, taught me to feel this ſenſation more than I ought to do. The little ruſtic thinks that ſhe is preferred by Montalbert, and forgets her humility.

" I thank you, moſt ſincerely thank you, for your forbearance. Believe me, a little ſelf-denial now will greatly accelerate the ſecurity with which we may ſee each other hereafter. My mother has ſo little idea of your having any partiality to me, that

ſhe ſeems quite eaſy now Charles Vyvian is gone, and, except that ſhe ſtill thinks I have done extremely wrong in refuſing to encourage the addreſſes of Hughſon, ſhe ſeldom dwells on what is paſſed. From preſent appearances, my dear friend, it ſeems as if we ſhould be fortunate enough to paſs a few tranquil and pleaſant hours in the ſociety of each other before you go to Italy; alas! they will be but tranſient—for yeſterday, Mrs. Vyvian, in ſpeaking of my drawing, and recommending to my mother to procure me a good maſter, ſhe ſaid, 'When my nephew, Montalbert, goes back, as he muſt now do very ſoon, ſince I find his mother is become very impatient at his long ſtay, he ſhall ſend over ſome chalks and crayons, for Roſalie, much better than can be found in London.'—If either of them had looked at me, at that moment, they would have remarked, that I did not hear with indifference the name of Montalbert; but fortunately I eſcaped obſervation, and ſoon recovered myſelf.

"It

" It is long, very long, ſince any circumſtance has given me ſuch pleaſure as being reſtored to my beloved benefactreſs, yet ſhe ſays little to me; ſhe makes no profeſſions of that kindneſs towards me, which, I believe, has not been leſſened even by our long ſeparation; but there is an affection in her manner which I cannot deſcribe. She is civiller to my ſiſter than to me; but ſhe addreſſes her as Miſs Leſſington, while ſhe calls me Roſalie. I recollect that it is *her* name, and it ſeems in *her* mouth to have peculiar charms.

" I have paſſed, perhaps, too much time ſince I left her in reflecting how happy I might be, could I be related to this dear woman without oppoſition from the more near relations of Montalbert. You have often told me, that you love her as a mother, though only the half ſiſter of your father. The ſweetneſs of her manners, even that weak health, and that air of penſive ſorrow, which her own children, at leaſt her daughters, ſeem to

conſider

conſider as the effect of bigotry or unſociable humour, make her to me an object of tenderer attention. O Montalbert! what delight it would be to me to ſoothe the hours which are embittered by matrimonial diſcord, and, I fear, by filial neglect.

" Yet, while I think thus, perhaps I am continuing a correſpondence with you, that may be diſpleaſing to her, that may add to her ſolicitude, and deprive her of the ſatisfaction of ſeeing her nephew married to a woman of equal rank and of his own church. This reflection is extremely bitter to me, and it occurs the oftener, becauſe I ſee with what alarm ſhe thinks of her ſon's making any other alliance than what his father would chuſe for him; though it is very certain that ambition only will govern him, and that, in regard to religion, ſhe cannot, if Mr. Vyvian dictates, be gratified.

" I ſhall hardly hear from you, Montalbert, again, before you will be here. As I now expect you, I ſhall not, I think,

betray

betray myſelf when we meet.—Till then, my dear friend, farewell!"

That ſhe was totally deſtitute of fortune gave not a moment's concern to Roſalie; dependent wholly on her mother, and likely, in caſe of her death, to be left wholly deſtitute on the world, ſince the ſhare ſhe had of Mr. Leſſington's fortune was to go to her other children at her deceaſe, ſhe felt not the leaſt uneaſineſs as to pecuniary circumſtances, but, with eaſy faith of youth, truſted that the attachment of her lover would ſave her from every diſtreſs, and that before ſhe ſhould be deprived of her ſurviving parent, whoſe life was apparently a very good one, ſhe ſhould be the wife of Montalbert.

He now ſaw her almoſt every day, for as he had always been very attentive to Mrs. Vyvian, there was nothing remarkable in his frequent viſits to her; nor was it ſtrange that he ſhould renew his ſlight acquaintance with her friends.

Miſs Leſſington, whoſe acquaintance increaſed every day, had continual invita-

tions

tions to ſtay at the houſes of ſome of them for ſeveral nights together. Roſalie failed not ſometimes to receive the ſame kind of compliments, but ſhe generally declined them, ſaying, that ſhe could not leave her mother alone: but, in fact, ſhe had no wiſh to mix in thoſe ſocieties, or to enter into thoſe public amuſements, which gave ſo much pleaſure to her ſiſter. While Maria, apprehenſive of the ſuperior elegance of Roſalie, ſhewed a viſible diſinclination to her joining theſe parties, and gradually diſcouraged her friends from giving theſe invitations, by obſerving, that her ſiſter was of a very reſerved turn; that ſhe had formed connections in a very different ſphere of life from the reſt of her family; and that it was merely giving her the trouble to find excuſes, to invite her to ſcenes or ſociety for which ſhe had a decided repugnance.

In a very ſhort time, therefore, the attornies and brokers wives, to whom Mr. Blagham had introduced the family, forbore to attempt engaging a young woman who

who they imagined gave herſelf airs, and was extremely proud and reſerved.—— Miſs Leſſington was left in undiſturbed poſſeſſion of all the admiration the ſet of men that belonged to theſe "worſhipful ſocieties" had to beſtow, and Roſalie at liberty to paſs her time in company much more agreeable to her.

Her mother, leſs refined, and loving cards rather too much, was not equally difficult as to her companions; though ſhe had really as much affection for Mrs. Vyvian as ſhe was capable of feeling for any body, ſhe could not help being ſometimes ſenſible of a want of variety. Her friend's piety and eſtrangement from the world made her, as good Mrs. Leſſington ſometimes thought, rather reſpectable than amuſing, and inſtead of ſuch long viſits from her confeſſor, Mrs. Leſſington ſecretly wiſhed for another, that they might *make up a rubber*. Inſenſibly ſhe became acquainted with ſome "mighty agreeable people" in the village, who never played high,

high, but were happy to make a little ſnug party juſt to paſs away the long evenings. One of theſe parties introduced a ſecond, a ſecond a third, till Mrs. Leſſington could hardly ſpare one in a week to paſs with her friend Mrs. Vyvian, who, when Roſalie was with her, ſeemed, however, to be ſcarce ſenſible of the abſence of her mother.

But from that unfortunate prepoſſeſſion received early in life, that to deny herſelf the moſt innocent gratifications were ſacrifices acceptable to Heaven, Mrs. Vyvian frequently abſtained from indulging herſelf with the cheerful converſation of Roſalie, who then, as her mother was ſo frequently out, and now went occaſionally to London for two or three days among her own and her eldeſt daughter's friends, was left at home, and the viſits of Montalbert were uninterrupted, and without inquiry. To be continually in preſence of a beloved object, to ſee or ſuppoſe that his attachment every moment becomes

ſtronger,

ſtronger, to liſten to arguments to which the heart yields but too ready an aſſent, was a ſituation of all others the moſt dangerous for a young woman who had not ſeen her nineteenth year. Montalbert, beſides the advantages of a very handſome perſon, had the moſt inſinuating manners and the moſt intereſting addreſs: he was naturally eloquent—love rendered his eloquence doubly formidable; and Roſalie had nothing to oppoſe to his earneſt entreaties for a ſecret marriage, but the arms with which he had himſelf furniſhed her—the fear of a diſcovery on the part of his mother, which he owned would injure, indeed ruin, his future proſpects in life. This he ſtill acknowledged, but averred that it was impoſſible his mother, who reſided at Naples, ſhould know that he was married in England. Roſalie repreſented, that if Mrs. Vyvian knew it, it muſt inevitably be known to her. Montalbert inſiſted that there was no neceſſity of Mrs. Vyvian's knowing any thing about it. Roſalie entreated that he would firſt go to

Italy,

Italy, without riſking the diſpleaſure of a parent on whom he depended. Montalbert declared, he ſhould be wretched to leave her; that he did not know how to acquire reſolution enough to abſent himſelf, leaving her, perhaps, expoſed to the perſecution of other lovers, which it diſtracted him only to think of, while he paſſed the miſerable hours in which he ſhould be abſent from her, in anxiety, in torture, which, if ſhe was once ſecurely his, would be infinitely leſs inſupportable.

But notwithſtanding the frequent opportunities they now had of meeting, and even of paſſing whole hours alone together, how was it poſſible that a private marriage could be effected?—Roſalie knew that to eſcape to Scotland, and return without being miſſed, and without avowedly eloping, was impoſſible. Montalbert allowed it to be ſo; but he had another expedient ready—they might be married by a Catholic prieſt. Roſalie had heard, but in a vague way, that ſuch marriages were not valid

valid, but Montalbert reaſoned her out of this perſuaſion. "Admitting, (ſaid he), my deareſt love, that it were as you have heard, would not ſuch a marriage be binding to me? Might it not at any time be renewed according to the laws of any country where we may reſide, when I ſhall be wholly at liberty? and is it material to you what reſtrictions are laid upon ſuch marriages in England, if your huſband looks upon other laws binding to him?—Even if we were to have the ceremony performed in your church, I ſhould think it neceſſary to have it gone over a ſecond time by a prieſt of ours." By ſuch arguments he ſometimes ſhook the wavering reſolution of Roſalie, who, except the ſingle circumſtance of his mother's known averſion to his marrying an Engliſh proteſtant, which her reaſon told her was unjuſt and unreaſonable, ſaw nothing that ought to prevent her giving her perſon where ſhe had already given her heart. In point of family and fortune, Montalbert was infinitely her ſuperior. Her mother therefore,

committed a breach of law ſo much to their advantage: he rather wiſhed to detach Montalbert from his purſuit, by repreſenting the great diſtance between him and Roſalie in temporal concerns, as well as the difference in ſpiritual affairs, which appeared to him ſo momentous. Finding it, however, very bootleſs to argue with a man of three and twenty, madly in love, he conſented to do as Montalbert required, and reconciled his conſcience by that accommodating reflection at hand on ſo many occaſions, "If I do not do it, ſome other will." He ſtipulated with Montalbert, however, that if there ſhould be any probability of his incurring the heavy penalty for marrying a minor, that he ſhould be immediately ſent to Rome at the expence of Montalbert; an expedient which Montalbert immediately agreed to, as indeed he would have done to any demands the father thought proper to have made, however unreaſonable they might have been.

The

The longer Roſalie reflected on the propoſals of her lover, the fainter became her oppoſition; yet ſtill conſcious that it could not be right to diſpoſe of herſelf without the conſent of her mother and her brother, ſhe more than once intreated Montalbert to allow her to conſult them; but he heard this requeſt always with impatience, declaring, that if ſhe determined to tear herſelf from him, to abandon him to all the horrors of that deſpair which her loſs would inflict, ſhe could find no way more certain than what ſhe propoſed. His vehemence, and the conviction of his ſincerity, which that vehemence brought with it, once more conquered her ſcruples. Montalbert extorted once more a reluctant and trembling acquieſcence, and then eagerly inſiſting on finding ſome immediate opportunity for them to meet, where the prieſt might attend, Roſalie, terrified at the ſtep ſhe was about to take, again recoiled, and intreated to

be releaſed from her inconſiderate promiſe.

Though the attachment between theſe young people ſeemed not even to be ſuſpected either by Mrs. Vyvian or Mrs. Leſſington, yet the conflict in the mind of Roſalie had ſuch an effect on her frame, that the former one day obſerved it to her as they were ſitting together alone. "Surely, my dear, (ſaid ſhe, laying down her work, and looking very earneſtly at Roſalie), ſurely you are not well."

"Dear Ma'am, (anſwered Roſalie), why do you ſuppoſe ſo?"

"You are pale, (ſaid Mrs. Vyvian); your eyes are heavy and languid. I am afraid, my love, ----------" She heſitated, and the conſcience of Roſalie at that moment accuſing her, a faint bluſh overſpread her countenance as ſhe eagerly cried, "Afraid, my dear Madam, of what?"

"Nay, of nothing, Roſalie, that need alarm you: I will tell you my fears—either

either you have ſome affection that makes you uneaſy, or the almoſt total ſeclusion in which you live is too much for your ſpirits."

"Indeed, Madam, my ſpirits would very ill bear the diſſipation in which my ſiſter lives. The ſeclusion that gives me an opportunity of paſſing ſome of my hours with you, is the greateſt gratification I can enjoy."

"But to the other article, Roſalie, what do you ſay?"

"To what article, Madam?"

"Oh! you have forgot already--to what I told you I feared as one cauſe of the alteration I have obſerved."

"Indeed, my dear Mrs. Vyvian, I am ſenſible of no alteration. You know how few people I ſee, and that with fewer ſtill I have much acquaintance, or wiſh it."

Mrs. Vyvian ſhook her head with an air of incredulity, and as Roſalie fancied of concern; but ſhe ſuffered the diſ-

courſe to drop, and Roſalie left her, trembling leſt the truth was ſuſpected, and dreading, yet feeling it neceſſary, to give an account of this dialogue to Montalbert.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

WHAT had paſſed the preceding evening between Mrs. Vyvian and Roſalie was no ſooner repeated to Montalbert, than it ſerved as an additional argument to enforce the conſent he had been ſo long ſoliciting. Montalbert was of a warm and impetuous temper: though he had never yet been emancipated from the government of an high-ſpirited and imperious mother, he was not the leſs bent on pleaſing himſelf, than are thoſe who have never been contradicted. It ſeemed, indeed, as if the ſevere reſtraint he had ſo long habitually been under, diſpoſed him to be more earneſt in a circumſtance on which the whole happineſs of his life depended; and when Roſalie aſked him how he could hope ever to

reconcile his mother to a marriage to which he himſelf owned ſhe would have unconquerable objections, he inquired, in his turn, what amends ſhe could make him for oppoſing the only connection which could make him happy, only from prejudice and difference of opinion in matters wherein he could not think as ſhe did, and wherein he thought it unreaſonable that her prepoſſeſſions ſhould interfere with his choice. "I will certainly not make my mother uneaſy, (ſaid he); I will ſo far pay a compliment to her unfortunate prejudices, as to conceal from her what would make her ſo: but to relinquiſh the only woman I could ever love, is ſurely a greater ſacrifice than ſhe ought to demand of me. If, indeed, I were about to diſgrace her, Roſalie, by uniting myſelf with a woman without reputation, or of a very mean aud unworthy origin, I ſhould feel that I ought not to be forgiven; but why, becauſe our modes of worſhipping God are different—why, becauſe my mother was born in

Italy,

Italy, and you in England, ſhould an imaginary barrier be raiſed, which muſt ſhut me out from happineſs for ever? What has reaſon and common ſenſe to do with all this?"—Roſalie was compelled to acknowledge that it had very little: ſtill, however, the idea of a clandeſtine marriage ſhocked her; ſhe ſolicited moſt earneſtly that her mother might be made acquainted with it. This he ſtrenuouſly oppoſed; repreſenting, that if Mrs. Leſſington knew it, it would not be a ſecret from Mrs. Vyvian, "Who, however, ſhe may love you, (ſaid he), would make it a point of conſcience to prevent my marrying a Proteſtant, and ruining myſelf, as ſhe would conclude I ſhould, in the affections of my mother for ever. You know, Roſalie, how much I love my aunt. There is a penſive reſignation to a very unhappy fate, a ſort of acquieſcence, which ariſes not from want of ſenſibility, but from the patience and ſelf-government ſhe has learned, that render her to me infinitely intereſting, while her kindneſs and affection

to me demand all my gratitude. But with great virtues, and I know hardly any one who has ſo many, ſhe is not without prejudices, which greatly add to her own unhappineſs. It is unneceſſary to point out to you what theſe are; nor need I tell you, Roſalie, that they are exactly ſuch as would induce her to think it her indiſpenſible duty to inform my mother of our attachment. Then all the evils, I apprehend, would follow. I muſt either hazard offending her beyond all hope of forgiveneſs, or I muſt loſe you for ever."—Let no faſtidious critic, on the characters of a novel, declaim againſt the heroine of this, as being too forward or too imprudent. There are only two ways of drawing ſuch characters: they muſt either be repreſented as———

" Such faultleſs monſters as the world
ne'er ſaw"——

Or with the faults and imperfections which occur in real life. Of theſe, many are ſuch as would, were they deſcribed as exiſting in a character for which the reader

is

is to be intereſted, entirely deſtroy that intereſt. There are other errors, which, in an imaginary heroine, we may at once blame and pity, without finding the intereſt we take in her ſtory weakened. This is the ſentiment that Roſalie may excite; who being tenderly attached to a man, not only amiable in his perſon, but of the moſt inſinuating manners, believing his declarations of love, and perſuaded that her friends could not diſapprove of the ſtep he ſo earneſtly urged her to take; fearing, on the other hand, to loſe him; that he would be convinced he was indifferent to her, would return to Italy, and make an effort to forget her; found her objections giving way before ſo many motives, and at length, though with trembling reluctance, agreed to the expedient Montalbert propoſed—of their being married by the prieſt whom he had engaged for that purpoſe. Roſalie neither knew the danger this man incurred, nor that her marriage would not be binding. She knew, however, enough, from ſuch information as ſhe had caſually

picked up, to expreſs her doubts to Montalbert as to its legality, who found the means of ſatisfying her ſcruples. "It is binding to me, (ſaid he), ſince the ceremony is performed after the laws of our own church; and where then, my Roſalie, can be the foundation of your doubts?—In a few, a very few days after that fortunate hour, which ſhall give me a right to call you mine, I muſt leave you; but I ſhall know myſelf to be your huſband; I ſhall feel no diſquiet, leſt the perſuaſion of your family, or any other circumſtance, ſhould throw you into the arms of another, and the hope of returning ſoon to England to claim you for my wife, will give me patience not only to endure this enforced abſence, but will animate me to thoſe exertions that may ſhorten its duration."——The calmer reaſon of Roſalie ſometimes told her, that there was much of ſophiſtry in many of theſe arguments; but what young woman of her age liſtens long to reaſon, in oppoſition to the pleadings of the man ſhe loves?—Montalbert

was

was equally paſſionate and perſevering: he had ſome plauſible manner of obviating every apprehenſion, and it now only remained to be conſidered, how the marriage ceremony might paſs with moſt ſecrecy.

Though Montalbert had not ſeemed to make more frequent viſits than uſual at the houſe of Mrs. Vyvian, nor to appear oftener at Hampſtead, he had in reality hardly ever quitted it ſince Mrs. Vyvian had ſettled there; but had taken an obſcure lodging in the lower part of the village, where he was ſure he ſhould not be known, and this gave him an opportunity of remaining later either with his aunt, when Roſalie happened to be there, or at the houſe of Mrs. Leſſington, who was now more frequently than ever in London. Then it was that Roſalie paſſed the evenings entirely with Mrs. Vyvian, and nothing was ſo natural as that Montalbert, when he happened to be there, ſhould attend her home, to which Mrs. Vyvian

never ſeemed to make any objections on Roſalie's account, though ſhe often expreſſed her apprehenſions of the danger he incurred in returning ſo late to London.

It was ſtrange, that ſuſpecting as Mrs. Vyvian ſeemed to do, ſome attachment which made Roſalie unhappy, ſhe had no notion that her nephew might be the object of this attachment; but it ſeemed never once to have occurred to her, and Montalbert conducted himſelf ſo cautiouſly before her, when Roſalie was of the party, that ſhe had no reaſon to believe he regarded her otherwiſe than as a common acquaintance. Montalbert, young as he was, had been a great traveller: he had lived at Paris, at Vienna, at Turin, at Rome, and at Florence, and had acquired in the more early part of his life the reputation of being a young man of diſſipation and intrigue. Theſe gaieties had been exaggerated, and Mrs. Vyvian had received an impreſſion of his libertiniſm, which

which had never been effaced. She now, therefore, could not imagine, that for ſuch a man the ſimplicity of Roſalie's beauty could have any attractions; and perſuaded, as ſhe was, that he was engaged in intrigues among women of a very different deſcription, ſhe ſometimes gently reproved and ſometimes ſlightly rallied him, on theſe faſhionable exceſſes. He humoured her in the anſwers he gave; liſtened as if half diſpoſed to feel contrition, or defended himſelf, as if conſcious of the truth of theſe charges—management which would have concealed his real ſentiments and deſigns from a more penetrating obſerver than Mrs. Vyvian.

During the few days that Montalbert was in doubt how to procure unſuſpected the admiſſion of the prieſt to Roſalie, while he was with her, the family of his aunt arrived from their houſe in the north to ſettle for the winter in Park Lane. Mr. Vyvian contented himſelf with calling one morning on horſeback, with a ſlight and cold inquiry. He told his wife, that he had

directed

directed his ſteward to attend her whenever ſhe pleaſed on money matters, and that his daughters ſhould viſit her the next day: he then mentioned the marriage of the eldeſt, of which the preliminaries were now ſettled; he did not, however, tell Mrs. Vyvian of this, becauſe he thought her approbation of any conſequence, but ſpoke of it as a matter ſettled, ſignifying, at the ſame time, that it was his pleaſure ſhe ſhould ſpeak to her daughter of the arrangement, as being what every part of her family would not but approve. Mrs. Vyvian acquieſced, without any remonſtrance on the cruelty of thus diſpoſing of her child at ſo early an age, without even conſulting her mother. A few tears involuntarily fell from her eyes as ſoon as her unfeeling huſband was gone; but ſhe immediately went to her oratory, and found conſolation in the duties of religion; to which, under all theſe trying circumſtances, ſhe had ever recourſe.

But the appearance of the two Miſs Vyvians had another effect on Montal-

bert.

bert. Theſe ladies, young as they were, had been early initiated into the world. They were no longer diffident and unaffuming, but had all the confidence of women of middle age, without their judgment; were careleſs of the opinion of all the world as to any thing but their beauty and air of high ton, and rather inclined to provoke cenſure, by their ſingularity, than to conciliate by civility, or engage by gentleneſs. They had already learned that diſdain of all inferiors which belongs to people of the very firſt world; and the alliance the eldeſt was about to form, which would eventually place her in the firſt rank of nobility, ſeemed to have elevated the haughty ſpirits of both: an alteration which, on their very firſt viſit, their mother ſaw with additional diſquiet; while Montalbert, who was with Mrs. Vyvian when they came, beheld and heard them with diſguſt, that amounted almoſt to averſion.

During the ſtay Montalbert made at her father's ſeat in the north, Miſs Vyvian had

been piqued at the little attention he had ſhewn her, and mortified to obſerve his neglect of thoſe charms, which *ſhe* thought, and which her maid aſſured her, ought to attract the homage of all the world. That Montalbert was ſo far from paying her this homage, that he took the privilege of his near relationſhip to tell her of her faults, was not to be forgiven by Miſs Vyvian. She had by no means forgotten, now that ſhe met him in London, the ſlights ſhe had received in Yorkſhire, and attacked him with ſevere ſort of raillery, which he failed not to return, though with more good-humour than the lady deſerved. Thus paſſed the firſt viſit; but, on the ſecond, (as the young ladies affected ſtill to retain ſo much conſideration for their mother as to make their airings very frequently towards Hampſtead), it happened, unluckily enough, that Mrs. Vyvian, not aware of their coming, had ſent for Roſalie to ſit with her. Montalbert ſoon after came in; and as Mrs. Vyvian was pleaſed to encourage her taſte in drawing, Montalbert, who without

without any affectation underſtood it extremely well, was giving her ſome rules, and, leaning over her chair, was loſt in the pleaſure of inſtructing his charming pupil; but he ſometimes varied a little from what he undertook to teach, and, inſtead of giving her a ſketch of the object he was deſcribing, he wrote a line or two in Italian. Mrs. Vyvian was penſively at work, and did not regard them. The room where they ſat was at a diſtance from the door to which the coaches drove up, and while this was going on, a footman entered, announcing the two Miſs Vyvians.

Montalbert in confuſion quitted the table near which he was ſtanding, and Roſalie, whoſe cheeks were dyed with bluſhes, was putting away her drawings; but Mrs. Vyvian, ſpeaking mildly, bade her not diſturb herſelf; then, welcoming her daughters, ſhe ſaid, "My dears, here is your playfellow and acquaintance, the youngeſt Miſs Leſſington, your old friend Roſalie."

Miſs

Miſs Vyvian, towards whom her younger ſiſter ſeemed to look, as if to regulate her own behaviour, turned haughtily to Roſalie, and making her a formal and cold curtſey, muttered ſomething in ſo low a voice, that it could not be heard; then, without taking any further notice, began to tell her mother where ſhe had been, and who ſhe had ſeen. Miſs Barbara, the youngeſt, took not the leaſt notice of Roſalie, but, as if ſhe had never ſeen her before, ſat profoundly ſilent.

Montalbert, who remarked with indignation this inſolent behaviour, and who ſaw a faint bluſh of grief and regret wavering on the pale cheek of Mrs. Vyvian, was tempted to expreſs ſome part of what he felt, but he checked himſelf, and had determined to go, when Miſs Vyvian, caſting a malicious look at the drawing-table, and then at Roſalie, who ſat by it unoccupied, ſaid, "Oh! I ſee now, Mr. Montalbert, from whence it happens, that your friends in town complain that they never ſee you—

you

you have found employment here in teaching ſome of the fine arts."

"If I were capable of teaching them, (replied Montalbert, who could not ſo command his countenance, but that it expreſſed his reſentment), if I were capable, Miſs Vyvian, of inſtructing, I ſhould think myſelf highly honoured were that young lady to become my ſcholar; but, I aſſure you, ſhe is already ſo great a proficient, that it would not be in my power to improve the elegance of her execution."

"Oh! I dare ſay, (replied Miſs Vyvian); and now I recollect, Miſs Leſſington, I think you uſed to be fond of drawing, and had ſome leſſons *when you lived with* us. But, Mr. Montalbert, ſince this lady has no occaſion for your inſtructions, do tell me what it is you do with yourſelf? Do you know, that out of the few people I have ſeen, at leaſt a dozen have aſked me, what is become of my gay and gallant couſin? Some have aſſerted, (added ſhe, with a very ſignificant look), that you are married,

married, and others, that you are
melancholy mad for the love of so
beauty; but all agree that you ar
creature."

Mrs. Vyvian, however, hurt a
wild and improper ſpeech, had no
expreſs, as much as ſhe dared do,
of its indecorum, before ſhe wa
with the pale countenance of Roſa
ſeemed ready to faint. Montall
about to reply, when Mrs. Vyvi
unable to check herſelf, roſe from
and taking Roſalie's hand, ſaid, i
mulous voice, " I am ſorry, my d
Leſſington, that you are ſo ſhocke
unkindneſs and rudeneſs of Miſs
I will take care that you ſhall n
be ſubject to it. My woman ſhal
you home, and I beg you and y
ther will accept my apology, th
made, till I can renew it in perſo

Roſalie, who had never ſeen M
vian exert ſo much ſpirit before,
was more terrified than ever, leaſt

ſort of her daughter ſhould bring on a quarrel of which ſhe would be the cauſe; alarmed too at the hint given about Montalbert, and almoſt ſinking under her apprehenſions of every kind, was glad to quit the room, which ſhe did immediately; but, diſabled by the violence of her emotions to go farther than the next, ſhe ſat down and burſt into tears.

While ſhe was, however, reaſoning herſelf into ſome degree of compoſure, Mrs. Vyvian, whoſe languid ſpirits were rouſed by the ill-behaviour of her daughter, was reproving her in very bitter terms, ſuch indeed as ſhe had never uſed before; but far from feeling the ſeverity of a remonſtrance ſhe ſo well deſerved, ſhe affected to turn off her impertinence with a laugh. "Dear Madam, (cried ſhe), I had no notion of making you ſo angry. Upon my honour I meant nothing in the way of affronting your fair protegée; and as to behaving as if I had forgotten her, dear, you know one really forgets every body in a year or two."

"You

"You have at leaſt forgot *yourſelf*, Miſs Vyvian," ſaid her mother.

Miſs Barbara now fancied it neceſſary for her to enter into a defence of her ſiſter. "I am ſure, Madam, my ſiſter meant nothing; but one muſt really feel it grating to find that Miſs, that country parſon's daughter, preferred to us. People have often ſaid, indeed, a great while ago, that the Leſſington family had as much of your favour as your neareſt relations. I am ſure neither of us, neither my ſiſter or me, had a thought of offending you—but it *does* ſeem hard to your own children, to ſee people, who are comparatively ſtrangers, ſo much more taken notice of."

"It is you and your ſiſter Barbara, (ſaid the unhappy mother, while ſobs ſtifled her voice), who have eſtranged yourſelves from me; it is you and your ſiſter--------" She could not go on. Montalbert, ſhocked by the ſight of her diſtreſs, approached her, and, tenderly taking her hand, ſaid, "Deareſt Madam, do not, I implore you, diſtreſs

diſtreſs yourſelf thus. Theſe ladies are young and inconſequent; they *may* learn, and, I heartily hope, will, to know the value of ſuch a mother." The agony of Mrs. Vyvian redoubled. "Nay, but I intreat you, (continued he), to be calm. Allow me to ſend your woman to you."

"O no! (cried ſhe, with a deep ſigh), do not leave me, Montalbert. I have in you all the conſolation which is left me, now that my ſon is ſent far from me."

"Since you oblige me to ſpeak plainer, Madam, (ſaid Miſs Vyvian, who ſeemed wholly unmoved at her mother's diſtreſs), ſince you compel me to ſay diſagreeable things, I muſt tell you that it was quite time my brother *was* ſent, as my Papa ſent him; for *he* too was in danger of becoming too much attached to the ſame people that have weaned your affections from us. I ſhould never have mentioned it, though, I aſſure you, if I had not ſeen *that girl here*, and been ſo found fault with for not worſhipping her enough; for now my brother

ther is gone, it is a matter of indifference to me who her heart attracts; *other* people are old enough to take care of themſelves—but come, ſiſter, our company does not ſeem juſt now to give Mama any pleaſure; another time, perhaps, we may be more fortunate."

"Before you go, (ſaid Mrs. Vyvian, endeavouring to ſtifle her convulſive ſighs, and to ſpeak diſtinctly), I conjure you to tell me what you mean about my ſon."

"It is a very unwelcome taſk, Ma'am, (replied her eldeſt daughter), and I might not be believed; but if you aſk the Abbé Hayward, he, perhaps, may obtain credit, even when he tells you ſo unwelcome a truth, as that your ſon, when you thought him engaged in quite another tour, was at Holmwood with one or two of his friends, (ſhe caſt a malicious look at Montalbert as ſhe ſaid this), and there was reaſon to apprehend that this Miſs, or ſome of the Miſſes her ſiſters, were the occaſion of his paying much more frequent viſits

at

at the parſonage houſe, than even you yourſelf, perhaps, would have approved of, ſince, I can hardly think, your friendſhip would induce you to overlook the ſhocking diſparity between the only ſon of Mr. Vyvian and *ſuch people as thoſe.*"

It ſeemed as if the unfortunate mother was utterly incapable of anſwering. She repeated in a faint voice, "The Abbé Hayward!—My ſon—My ſon at Holmwood!"—Her daughters, who appeared thus to have plunged a dagger in her heart, left her without any attempt to mitigate the pain they had inflicted, and ſhe remained alone with Montalbert, who, during this converſation, had exhibited ſymptoms of anger and diſquiet, which Mrs. Vyvian was too much affected to obſerve. It was ſome moments before ſhe recovered herſelf enough to command her voice. "Tell me, dear Montalbert, (cried ſhe at length), what does Miſs Vyvian mean?—Tell me, when was my Charles at Holmwood?—When did he thus viſit Mr. Leſſington's family?"

" Never, Madam, I can venture to aſſure you, with the leaſt improper deſign..... It is true, that when we were upon our tour this ſummer round the coaſt, the Count and I expreſſed a wiſh to ſee Holmwood. He, as having heard it ſpoken of as a fine old place; I, becauſe I uſed to be fond of it when I was a boy, and paſſed there the moſt pleaſant of my hours during my occaſional viſits to England. As Vyvian was as fond of the ſcheme as we were, we went thither for four or five days. Charles fatigued himſelf too much, and was taken ill; but he recovered perfectly the next day: for ſome reaſon or other, he did not ſeem to wiſh you and his father ſhould know he had viſited Holmwood. This I only know by his enjoining the Count to ſecrecy, when, he being obliged to return to London, left us there."

" You ſtaid there then ſome time?"

" I cannot be correct, (anſwered Montalbert heſitating); our ſtay, whether there or elſewhere, ſeemed to me to be a matter of no conſequence at the time—nor could I ima-

I imagine why it was neceſſary to keep a man's viſit to the ſeat of his father a ſecret. As near as I can recollect, we were there about ſeven or eight days."

"Seven or eight days! (repeated Mrs. Vyvian); and did Charles paſs much of his time at the houſe of Mr. Leſſington?"

"Indeed he did not. I believe I may venture to aſſure you, he never was there but when I accompanied him: I am ſure, I may ſay, that he went with no deſign that you could diſapprove, and that all Miſs Vyvian has thought proper to ſay originates in miſrepreſentation on one ſide, and malicious jealouſy on the other. For Heaven's ſake, deareſt Madam, make yourſelf eaſy! I am perſuaded, that, in regard at leaſt to Charles, you have no reaſon to be otherwiſe."

A little ſoothed by theſe aſſurances, Mrs. Vyvian became more calm, and at that moment ſeeing the Abbé Hayward coming up the garden, of which he had

a key to let himſelf in, from his morning walk, Montalbert rang for Neſbit, Mrs. Vyvian's woman, and leaving her miſtreſs to her care, haſtened away to ſpeak to him.

Their conference was long and ſerious. Mr. Hayward aſſured Montalbert, that he would quiet the ſpirits of Mrs. Vyvian relative to the ſuppoſed viſits of her ſon at Barlton Brooks, and recommended it to Montalbert very earneſtly to conceal as far as was now poſſible the diſagreeable dialogue which had paſſed that morning. "You know Mr. Vyvian, (ſaid he), and how violent and unfeeling he is..... There is no knowing what rudeneſs and reproaches he may throw on that excellent lady, if this family diſpute goes to any length..... I tremble for her peace."——The council this good man gave was perfectly reaſonable. Montalbert felt that it was ſo; yet there was ſomething in his manner, when he ſpoke of the Leſſington family, which gave

Montalbert

Montalbert an idea of ſome myſtery that he could not comprehend. He returned, however, no more to the houſe, but haſtened to find Roſalie at that of her mother.

Mrs. Leſſington had gone to London early in the morning, was to go to a play that night, and to an opera the next, a ſpectacle which ſhe had not ſeen for many years, and about which ſhe had expreſſed as much eagerneſs as a girl. It was in hopes of making his advantage of this abſence, that Montalbert had met Roſalie at Mrs. Vyvian's in the morning. Roſalie, dreading importunity which ſhe had no longer reſolution to contend with, had taken ſhelter there. Mrs. Vyvian, not at all expecting either Montalbert or her daughters, had engaged her to ſtay all day; when Miſs Vyvian's jealouſy and malice awakened by the ſight of Roſalie, whom ſhe had never thought ſo very handſome before, had, together with ſome circumſtances hitherto concealed or ſtifled,

occaſioned the ſcene of the morning: a ſcene which did more to accelerate the views of Montalbert, than he could have done in another week with all the eloquence of the moſt paſſionate love.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

THERE could be but little doubt but that the correſpondence between Montalbert and Roſalie was ſuſpected, if not abſolutely diſcovered. Firmly as he thought he could rely on the fidelity of the perſon he had employed, it was but too evident that he was in ſome degree betrayed, and Roſalie, whom he found in tears, acknowledged that their ſituation admitted not of heſitation; that Montalbert muſt either return immediately to Italy, or riſque every diſcovery in regard to his mother, which he had ſo many reaſons to avoid.

It was vain to weary themſelves with conjectures as to the ſource from which Miſs Vyvian derived the intelligence that ſhe detailed with ſo much malicious pleaſure. On any other occaſion Montalbert

would have flown into one of thoſe tranſports of paſſion to which he was but too ſubject, and have inſiſted on an explanation; but the tears and terrors of Roſalie, who ſaw the diſcovery likely not only to produce every kind of miſchief they dreaded, but eventually to ſeparate them for ever, now checked every impulſe of reſentment, and left to Montalbert no other wiſh than to ſecure her his, and to return to Italy before the malignity of his couſin ſhould have conveyed intelligence thither, which would embroil him for ever with his mother, and probably deprive him of that affluence to which it was now his delight to think he ſhould raiſe the woman he adored.

There now ſeemed no alternative between reſigning Montalbert for ever, depriving him of his inheritance by a diſcovery, or conſenting to ſacrifice her own ſcruples. It is not difficult to foreſee that ſhe choſe the latter. Another whole day was to paſs before the return of her mother; and it was ſettled that the prieſt, whom

whom Montalbert had engaged, ſhould call early in the morning on pretence of a meſſage from Mrs. Leſſington to Roſalie; that Montalbert ſhould ſoon after arrive on his way to Mrs. Vyvian's, of whom he was ſuppoſed to be on the point of taking leave—and that the marriage ſhould then be celebrated according to the Romiſh ritual, in the preſence of a friend whom Montalbert was to bring with him. There was, in fact, neither difficulty nor danger of detection in this arrangement. The country ſervants of Mrs. Leſſington, a maid and a boy, took every thing that was told them for granted. The ceremony was ſoon over, and a teſtimony of its performance being given to Roſalie, the prieſt departed to London with the friend of Montalbert, while he himſelf went to Mrs. Vyvian's, where he intended to dine, and where he hoped his aunt would, without any ſolicitation, ſend for Roſalie. In this, however, he was miſtaken: he found Mrs. Vyvian ſo much affected by

the ſcene of the day before, that ſhe was confined to her bed. She admitted him to her bed ſide, and he was ſhocked to ſee the havoc which even a few hours acute uneaſineſs had made in her enfeebled frame. " You ſee, (ſaid ſhe), how it is with me, Montalbert. I have no longer ſtrength to reſiſt that more corroſive of all miſeries, the eſtrangement and ingratitude of my own children—of my daughters, I ought to ſay—for Charles, my poor boy, I believe loves me; but what I ſuffer from them, Montalbert, is indeed———

' Sharper than the ſerpent's tooth."

Montalbert endeavoured to ſooth her agitated ſpirits, by repreſenting to her, that her daughters were young and thoughtleſs, giddy with youth, health, and proſperity, and that a few years would, in all probability, produce a fortunate change in their volatile diſpoſitions. " A few years? (ſaid Mrs. Vyvian, with a melancholy ſmile); and do you think that a *very* few

few years, or more probably a very few months, will not finiſh all for me in a much more certain manner?——O yes! yes!" .....

She pauſed a moment as if to recover herſelf, and then ſaid, in a ſtill lower tone, "But there is one thing, my dear Harry, that I wiſh to ſay to you, perhaps—perhaps I may never ſee you again, and I would feign ------"

Montalbert remained ſilent in anxious expectation of what ſhe was going to ſay; but, as if ſhe could not collect reſolution enough, ſhe ſighed deeply, put her hand to her head, and ſeemed to ſuffer great pain there; then, becoming more languid, ſaid, "But I hope I *ſhall* ſee you again, Harry, when I am more able to converſe: yet ſurely you do not mean to prolong much your ſtay in England?"

"If my mother would grant me permiſſion, (anſwered he), to ſtay till ſpring, I own it would be agreeable to me."

"I ſhould not ſuppoſe ſhe would, Harry, (ſaid Mrs. Vyvian). I underſtood

that her laſt letters expreſſed great anxiety for your return, and you know ſhe does not very patiently bear contradiction..... But I wonder, Montalbert, what attractions England can have for you. Oh! if it were *in my* power to go to Italy, how readily would I quit this country for ever; and yet-------"—Again ſhe heſitated and ſighed, and Montalbert, finding no pretence for naming Roſalie, and that it was unlikely he ſhould paſs the day with her as he had fondly hoped, aſſured her he would ſee her again ſeveral times before he left England, ſince he ſhould await the arrival of his next letters before he fixed the day of his departure, and then took his leave.

It was but too certain, however, that he had that morning received the moſt poſitive commands from his mother to ſet out immediately, mingled with ſome ſevere reproaches for his having delayed his journey, from time to time, ſo much beyond that which he had originally fixed for his ſtay. He now thought it more

than

than ever impoſſible to leave Roſalie, though he had ſworn that if ſhe were once irrevocably his, he would go without further heſitation. To invent ſome plauſible pretence for the evaſion of this promiſe was now his object, and ſo great was the reluctance with which he thought of going, that he ſometimes determined rather to brave the diſpleaſure of his mother, and boldly to combat her prejudices, than leave his wife, now more dear to him than ever: but was there no medium between theſe extremities? was it not poſſible for him to take her with him?—While he meditated on the practicability of ſuch a project, and the arguments he ſhould uſe to prevail upon her to conſent to it, he found himſelf before the door of Mrs. Leſſington's houſe, and was going in, when he was amazed and concerned to obſerve her and her daughter Maria getting out of a coach, which he had till then imagined had juſt ſtopped at the houſe of one of her neighbours. As he could not retreat without being ſeen, and his uneaſy curioſity

was

was excited by this unexpected and unwelcome return, he advanced towards Mrs. Leſſington, and was beginning a ſpeech about Mrs. Vyvian, whoſe name he meant to uſe as an excuſe for his calling; but, without ſeeming to attend, ſhe began to apologize for not having it in her power to aſk him in, being, ſhe ſaid, in great alarm on account of her daughter.

"What daughter?—and oh! for Heaven's ſake, what is the matter?"—were words that were on the point of iſſuing from Montalbert's lips, who thought only of Roſalie: when this indiſcretion on his part was prevented by Mrs. Leſſington's proceeding to tell him, that her eldeſt married daughter, who was near her time, had ſuffered from being overturned in a chaiſe, and had entreated to ſee her mother, who had, therefore, haſtened from London, where ſhe received the letter, to pack up a few neceſſaries, and was ſetting out poſt immediately afterwards for the houſe of her daughter in Suſſex. Montalbert, alarmed leſt Roſalie was going

too,

too, trembled ſo much, that he had not courage to aſk; but to leave the houſe without knowing was impoſſible. Regardleſs, therefore, of the rules of decorum, which certainly demanded that he ſhould abſent himſelf, he followed Mrs. Leſſington into the houſe, where his ſudden reappearance, and the unexpected arrival of her mother, had ſuch an effect on the countenance and manner of Roſalie, as could not have eſcaped obſervation, had not Mrs. Leſſington and Maria been both much engaged with the immediate preparations for their journey; for amidſt her maternal anxiety for her daughter, the elder lady was by no means indifferent to the appearance ſhe was to make among her former country neighbours; and though ſhe was ſtill in deep mourning, ſhe obſerved that it was not the leſs neceſſary to be "tolerably dreſſed."

Miſs Maria was of courſe more ſolicitous on this important matter than her mother, and in the midſt of their giving orders

to

to one to run to the mantua-makers, and another to fetch home a new bonnet, &c. &c. they neither of them ſeemed to recollect that it was neceſſary to make ſome arrangement about Roſalie, or even to remember that ſhe was in the houſe.

She remained, therefore, a few moments in the parlour with Montalbert, who, advancing trembling to her, inquired eagerly if ſhe alſo was going? "I think not, (anſwered ſhe); but my mother, in her hurry, ſeems totally to have forgotten me."—"I pray Heaven, (ſaid he), that you may be left behind! If you go, I ſhall be diſtracted. When will it be decided?—How can I know?"

"I had better go up to my mother, (anſwered Roſalie), offer to aſſiſt her, and aſk for her commands."—O haſten, (cried Montalbert), my angel, or I ſhall die with impatience!—I *muſt* ſtay till I know what is to be your deſtination, and will make ſome pretence for my intruſion." Roſalie then went up to her mother,

ther, who ſeemed to be awakened, by her preſence, to ſome ſenſe of recollection as to what was to become of her youngeſt daughter during her abſence. "I don't know, child, (ſaid ſhe), how to take you with us very well, as your brother Blagham is in town for two days on law buſineſs, and is deſirous of going down with us in a poſt chaiſe."—Roſalie's heart beat ſo, that ſhe could hardly breathe.

"I declare, (continued her mother), I know not how to manage about you. To be ſure it will be but a diſagreeable journey, and I ſuppoſe, my dear, you do not want to go?"

"If I could be of any uſe to my ſiſter," ſaid Roſalie heſitating.

"Oh! as to *that*, (anſwered Mrs. Leſſington) there is no *occaſion* to be ſure; but it will be lonely for you at home, unleſs, indeed, Mrs. Vyvian would be ſo good as to take you."

Roſalie knew, from the ſcene of the preceding morning, that Mrs. Vyvian could not,

not, without expoſing herſelf anew to the inſults of her daughter, which it was painful even to think of.

This, however, ſhe could not now explain to her mother, who, after a moment's heſitation, proceeded....." I have a mind to ſend to Mrs. Vyvian; yet I don't know—perhaps it will be inconvenient to her. There are times when I know it would be painful to her to have company;—but—let me—ſee—I dare ſay my friends the Hillmores would take you for a few days, and then you might come back; and Mrs. Vyvian would, perhaps, nay I am ſure ſhe would, have you with her as much as her ſpirits will allow, and by that time—moſt probably, you know we ſhould be come back."

Though Roſalie knew the Hillmores were the moſt diſagreeable people in the world, ſhe had neither courage to object, nor preſence of mind to propoſe any other plan. She thought ſhe ſaw in her mother's manner an evident wiſh to get her off her hands,

hands, on the preſent occaſion, without much ſolicitude as to the propriety of her ſituation during her abſence; and at that moment ſhe felt happy in the conſciouſneſs of being the wife of Montalbert, who would, in every event, defend and protect her.

She remained ſilent, however, and Mrs. Leſſington, who was ſtill buſily engaged in packing, at length turned to her, and ſaid, "Well, child! and what do you ſay to the plan of paſſing the little time we ſhall be away between Mrs. Vyvian and Mr. Hillmore's?"

"I know very little of Mr. Hillmore's family, (ſaid Roſalie timidly); but I dare ſay, Madam, you are ſure they would be kind enough to receive me."

"To be ſure I am, (replied Mrs. Leſſington); and as to Mrs. Vyvian, I wiſh I could ſee her myſelf—but—I have not time.—However—ſtay—do you think Mr. Montalbert is gone?—I dare ſay he would be ſo good as to carry a meſſage for me."

"I am

"I am perſuaded he would, (ſaid Roſalie timidly), if he is not gone."

"Do go down and ſee: no—I will go myſelf." She then deſcended to the room where Montalbert ſtill remained, who, when he heard the commiſſion ſhe gave him to his aunt, accepted it with tranſport he could with difficulty diſguiſe. "I only waited here, (ſaid he), to know if I could be of any uſe to you in your preſent hurry, and you cannot oblige me more than in employing me." He then haſtened to Mrs. Vyvian, to whom he delivered a meſſage rather ſuited to his own purpoſes than very exact as to correctneſs, and modulating Mrs. Vyvian's anſwer in the ſame way, he returned inſtantly to Mrs. Leſſington, who, concluding the diſpoſal of Roſalie ſettled her own way, told her ſhe would leave a note for her friends the Hillmores, which ſhe haſtily wrote, and then directed Roſalie to ſtay a few hours after her to adjuſt the houſe and put every thing away, which her preſent hurry did not allow her to attend to. After which

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an hackney-coach was to convey Roſalie to Mincing Lane, where Mr. Hillmore lived, and ſhe was herſelf to deliver the note that was to ſecure her reception for the firſt three or four days of her mother's abſence; after which, if that abſence continued, ſhe was to return and remain under the protection of Mrs. Vyvian.

This arrangement was ſo exactly calculated to anſwer all the wiſhes of Montalbert, that he now trembled with apprehenſion leſt it ſhould be revoked. He would not, however, venture to ſtay, leſt Mrs. Leſſington ſhould entertain any ſuſpicions of the cauſe of his extraordinary zeal; he therefore wiſhed her a good journey, and left her. Soon after which Roſalie ſaw her mother and ſiſter get into a poſt-chaiſe, which was ordered to ſtop to take up Mr. Blagham at the houſe of a friend at Iſlington, and then they drove away, leaving her to reflect on the extraordinary circumſtances that had thus left her

ever, depended on the return of Mrs. Leffington.

Roſalie, on her arrival at the houſe of Mr. Hillmore, found a very cordial reception; but the manners of the whole family were ſo unlike thoſe ſhe had in the happieſt part of her life been accuſtomed to—the old lady was ſo vulgarly civil, the young men ſo impertinently familiar, and the miſſes ſo full of flutter and faſhions, —that Roſalie foreſaw ſhe would be eſteemed very bad company. They had already, from the report of Miſs Maria, entertained an idea that their gueſt was proud and reſerved; and Roſalie ſaw by their manner, that they diſliked her and wiſhed her away. The mother, becauſe ſhe feared her beauty might attract one of her ſons; the daughters, through jealouſy of their lovers. The next day after her arrival there ſhe received a letter from her mother, which informed her that though Mrs. Grierſon was doing well, yet it would be ten days before ſhe ſhould return. Roſalie, therefore, armed herſelf

herſelf with patience, to paſs a few days longer where ſhe was before ſhe returned to Hampſtead, but Montalbert could not ſuffer her to remain there without ſeeing her. As he was not known to the people of the houſe, he called under pretence of a meſſage from Mrs. Vyvian, but he could only ſee her in a formal way in the preſence of Mrs. Hillmore and her daughters, who *prodigiouſly* admired him as a *very elegant genteel man indeed.*— He found they were going that evening to the play, where he determined to be himſelf.

It was then that he ſaw the ſuperior beauty of Roſalie attract all eyes, and heard inquiries around him, who that lovely girl was in mourning? The faces of the Miſs Hillmores were well known, though their party would have paſſed wholly unnoticed, but for the brilliant ſtar that now firſt appeared among them. Montalbert, from the other ſide of the houſe, enjoyed a peculiar kind of pleaſure at the admira-

tion excited by his wife: but one of the foibles of his temper was jealouſy; when therefore he ſaw two or three young men, acquaintances of the Hillmores, enter their box, evidently with a deſign of being introduced to her; when he ſaw young Hillmore, who was a ſort of a city wit and city buck, diſplace one of his ſiſters in order to ſit near Roſalie, he could remain where he was no longer; but croſſing the houſe, went into the next box, where he ſat the remainder of the evening, not near enough to ſpeak to her, ſo entirely was ſhe ſurrounded; but ſuffering inexpreſſible torments becauſe ſhe was ſpoken to by others.

His impetuous ſpirit could ill ſubmit to a longer courſe of ſuch puniſhment. He went out, therefore, to a tavern, a few moments before the play was over, and wrote a note to her, in which he inſiſted on her leaving the Hillmores the next morning. "I will ſend a ſervant, (ſaid he), with a chariot and a letter, as if from

from Mrs. Vyvian..... As the people you are with know neither her carriage nor her writing, you may very eaſily leave them without the leaſt ſuſpicion. I will will take care of the reſt; but remember, Roſalie, I muſt not be refuſed—I would not leave you expoſed another day to the impertinence of the vulgar puppies you are ſurrounded by to be maſter of an empire."

Montalbert, having ſealed this letter, waited at the door of the box for her coming out; but as ſhe had on each ſide of her competitors for the honour of leading her out, it was not without difficulty he found an opportunity of giving it to her.

The next day an handſome chariot, with a ſervant in livery, was at the door of Mr. Hillmore by eleven o'clock; the latter brought a note apparently from Mrs. Vyvian, which Roſalie ſhewed as a reaſon for leaving Mrs. Hillmore, who, while ſhe expreſſed great concern that they were

to seem to make the pleasure of *her good company*, was as well as the young ladies, heartily glad to see her depart. A short time brought her to a place where Montalbert waited for her to begin another short excursion from London. He endeavoured to increase the excessive fear she expressed, lest these journies should be discovered, by assuring her that he had taken every possible precaution to prevent it. That Mrs. Vyvian did not expect her for two or three days, at the end of which time he promised she should go back to Hampstead, and he had engaged a person to convey to him any letters that might arrive in the mean time from Mrs. Leffington, left, from any alteration in her plan, she should return and not find her daughter where she expected.——These measures, and Montalbert's solemn assurances, that as soon as he saw her once more safe under the protection of her mother, he would no longer delay a journey which

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ſo neceſſary on account of his own, that he would force himſelf, though the expence of his preſent felicity, to ſue ſuch meaſures as might ſecure nterrupted poſſeſſion hereafter.

CHAP. XI.

WHILE Roſalie was thus, as Mrs. Vyvian believed, paſſing part of the time of her mother's abſence as ſhe had directed, that excellent but unhappy woman, Mrs. Vyvian herſelf, was ſuffering under the moſt acute anxiety. The abſence of her ſon, the eſtrangement of her two daughters, and the cold and even ſevere conduct of the man to whom ſhe had been ſacrificed, made together a cruel combination of evils; which, however, did not ſo entirely occupy her mind, but that ſhe felt for Roſalie, to whom ſhe had ever ſhewn the tendereſt partiality, and to whom ſhe would with delight have granted an aſylum in her own houſe, had ſhe not been deterred by the envy and ill-humour which her daughters had expreſſed, and terrified

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at the hints they had given of an affection for her on the part of her ſon, which, if it ſhould once reach the ears of Mr. Vyvian, would, ſhe knew, ſo greatly enrage him, that he would forbid her ever receiving any of the Leſſington family again. Timid and mild, and with nerves ſhaken and enfeebled by a long courſe of unhappineſs, Mrs. Vyvian was unequal to contention with a violent, haughty, and unfeeling man, who diſdained to liſten to reaſon, and held all friendly attachments, every thing that did not coincide with ſelf-intereſted motives, to be mere cant and pretence. He had never conſidered the Leſſington family with an eye of favour; but while Leſſington lived, he had been uſeful to him in electioneering matters, and therefore he, and of courſe his family, had been endured; but the apprehenſion of any attachment between young Vyvian and a perſon whom his father conſidered ſo infinitely beneath him, would not have been ſuffered a moment, and Mrs. Vyvian knew that on the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion ſhe ſhould be

overwhelmed with menaces and reproaches, which ſhe found herſelf altogether unable to ſuſtain. This dread alone prevented her from hazarding a repetition of the language her daughters had held, and compelled her to ſubmit to ſo great a deprivation as that of often reſigning Roſalie's company, whoſe intereſting gratitude, and innocent, yet ſenſible, converſation, formed one of her greateſt pleaſures, and was beſt calculated to ſoothe her wounded heart.

Still, however, ſhe was uneaſy that ſo young and ſo pretty a woman ſhould be conſigned to the care of people of whom ſhe had no very high opinion. She fancied they were low bred, and was perſuaded that if the morals of Roſalie were in no danger among them, her delicacy of mind muſt ſuffer from the ſtyle of ſuch company: when, therefore, the law Monſalbert, who, while Roſalie was really at Mr. Hilmore's, called upon his aunt as uſual left his abſence might be remarked, ſhe continually queſtioned him about theſe people,

people, and he, not willing to appear to know much about them, gave her ſuch anſwers as ſerved rather to increaſe her ſolicitude for her former protegée, and her regret that ſhe could not give her protection in her own houſe.

Montalbert never loved his aunt ſo well as when he thus ſaw her intereſted for Roſalie; and ſometimes it ſeemed as if this intereſt was ſo ſtrong, that ſhe could not be angry at finding his ſentiments ſo entirely agreed with hers. Half reſolved to open his whole heart to her, and entreat her countenance, her protection, for his wife, he ſat meditating what to ſay, when the entrance of Mr. Hayward, or ſome ſentence Mrs. Vyvian uttered, again ſhook his reſolution, and deterred him from entruſting to her a ſecret of ſo much conſequence; while, if it ſtill remained a ſecret to every body but to her, his Roſalie could derive no benefit from the partial information, for Mrs. Vyvian would ſtill be deprived of the power of receiving her as Roſalie Leſſington, and as the wife of

Montalbert it would be ſtill more impoſſible.

It was now time for her to return to Hampſtead, where all Mrs. Vyvian could do was to receive her on thoſe days when none of her own family were likely to call upon her, or if they did, to ſend her into another room. Montalbert, during the four or five days that were to be the laſt of his ſtay in England, paſſed a part of each with Mrs. Vyvian, who, while ſhe thought it her duty to preſs him to begin a journey that had been ſo long delayed, began to be ſeriouſly uneaſy about his health, which ſhe thought was evidently declined. He was penſive and abſent, ſpoke little, and had loſt his appetite—ſymptoms that ſhe fancied indicated a decline, and induced her to urge him with increaſed earneſtneſs to begin his journey, in the perſuaſion that the winter in England was inimical to his conſtitution. Montalbert every day promiſed to fix the day of his departure; but every day brought with it ſome excuſe:—his baggage, ſome things he had beſpoke as

preſents

preſents to his Italian friends, were not ready; his own ſervant was taken ill; he muſt wait the arrival of a friend from the country, with whom he had buſineſs relative to his family's northern property—and while this went on, he lived in a miſerable ſtate of reſtraint, never ſeeing his wife but for a ſhort time in the preſence of Mrs. Vyvian, unleſs ſhe happened to be there of an evening, in which caſe he went home with her, but attended by a ſervant, under pretence that his horſes were at a ſtable not far from the houſe of Mrs. Leſſington.

Such a ſtate of conſtraint was inſupportable. More paſſionately attached to Roſalie than before he became her huſband, the idea of leaving her for weeks and months was become more terrible than that of death: he fancied it diſgraceful to ſubmit to divide himſelf from all he held dear, influenced merely by pecuniary conſiderations, and often reſolved to acknowledge his marriage and brave the conſequences; but then the fear of reducing to

poverty the woman he adored—of expoſing to the inconveniences of indigence her whom he thought worthy of a throne, checked his reſolution of making this dangerous avowal; and again he determined to leave her in the hope of returning to claim her, and place her in a ſituation of life which ſhe ſeemed born to fill.

Roſalie ſeized every opportunity that now preſented itſelf to preſs his going.—She urged his former promiſes, his own acknowledgements of the neceſſity of his departure: again he promiſed he would go, but again found it impoſſible to tear himſelf from her. But now her mother returned, and their meeting muſt become more rare and more difficult; and at length, but not till after he had received another letter from his mother, Montalbert determined to go. The laſt interview he could obtain with his wife was ſhort and hazardous. Neither of them could ſay farwel; and when he was gone, and Roſalie knew ſhe ſhould ſee him no more, ſhe felt ſo depreſſed, that, apprehenſive

ſive of the remarks that might be made, ſhe retired to her bed under pretence of a violent head-ach, though the pain ſhe felt was in her heart.

This pretence could not, however, be long continued, and Roſalie returned, though reluctantly, to the common buſineſs of life, while Montalbert, ſcarce knowing what he did, purſued his way to the ſea coaſt from whence he was to embark for France, meaning to paſs through that country to Italy; but the greater the diſtance became between him and the object of his love, the leſs ſupportable it became: a thouſand times he was tempted to return, and rather hazard every future conſequence than ſubject himſelf to the preſent miſery of a ſeparation ſo painful. Arrived on the borders of the ſea, this diſtracting irreſolution redoubled. It was yet in his power to return to all he held dear on earth—a few leagues of land only were between them, but ſoon immenſe worlds of water would divide them, and

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[illegible] that the ſingle circumſtance of its being not at his power to return when he would muſt increaſe all the impatience to ſee her: yet his reaſon told him, that his temporary abſence might be endured, ſince it might inſure the ſimple ſervitude of the woman he loved.

As it was now a time when multitudes of Engliſh who had long been prevented by the war from viſiting the continent, were haſtening to France, Montalbert was not many hours waiting for a wind, before he met ſome of his acquaintance, from whom it was impoſſible for him to eſcape. The gaiety and vivacity of theſe men, fatigued without amuſing the mind of Montalbert; they were, however, of ſome uſe to him in calling off his attention from the ſubject, on which it was painful and uſeleſs for him to dwell. One of his friends [illegible] his ſuppoſed melancholy, another [illegible] away on paſt adventures and future [illegible] of his own; and, amidſt this va-

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riety of converſation, the wind becoming favourable, the whole party were ſummoned on board, and in a few hours Montalbert found himſelf at Calais.

His friends, impatient to get to Paris, haſtened on their way, while Montalbert was again left alone to indulge his uneaſy reflections.

The traveller, who quits England with anguiſh of mind, has often found a tranſient relief in the variety and novelty offered by his arrival in a country, which, though ſo near his own, offers ſcenes ſo unlike thoſe he has been accuſtomed to. But this change had loſt its power over the mind of Montalbert, having travelled ſo often between Italy and England through France, each country was equally well known to him; and relapſing into his former deſpondence, he wandered along the French coaſt, looking with aching eyes towards England, and again tempted to return to it.—At length, however, after two days indulgence of this weakneſs, for ſuch he owned it was, he once more reaſoned him-

ſelf into a reſolution to proceed, and though with an heart which became more heavy every league, he haſtened towards Naples, making no ſtay at Paris, or any other town through which his route lay.

While he was thus obeying the imperious dictates of duty, Roſalie, concealing the wretchedneſs of her heart, endeavoured to paſs the time of this cruel abſence in perfecting herſelf in thoſe branches of knowledge moſt agreeable to him; but very unpleaſant were the many hours ſhe was obliged to paſs among people who had no ideas in common with her, who were engaged in other purſuits, and who ſeemed to conſider her, what indeed ſhe really was, a being of quite another ſpecies, who, in being among them, was evidently diſplaced.

The only time ſhe paſſed with any degree of ſatisfaction, was that when ſhe was admitted to ſit with Mrs. Vyvian, and to converſe with the Abbé Hayward.—Miſs Vyvian was now married and gone, accompanied by her father and her ſiſter, to the

the ſeat of her huſband's family in great parade. Her mother, of whom ſhe had taken a cold leave, ſunk into deeper dejection than ever: not that ſhe felt as a misfortune this more certain ſeparation from a daughter, who had long ceaſed to return her maternal tenderneſs; but it ſeemed as if her frame could no longer reſiſt the ſorrow inflicted upon her by the abſence of a ſon ſhe adored, aggravated by the ingratitude of his ſiſters.

Roſalie appeared to be more dear to her than ever, and there was now no impediment to their being often together; but Mrs. Vyvian, whoſe health viſibly declined, was not always well enough to leave her bed, or to be amuſed with Roſalie's endeavours to relieve her long hours of ſolitude by reading or muſic. When ſhe was able, however, to ſit up, the duties of her religion, which ſhe fulfilled with the moſt ſcrupulous exactneſs, alone detained her from the ſociety of Roſalie. Whatever might be the dejection of Mrs. Vyvian's

mind,

mind, her penetration was not blunted, and ſhe ſaw that ſomething unuſual preſſed upon the ſpirits of her young friend: again then ſhe ſpoke to her of what ſhe apprehended—"You are certainly not well, Roſalie, (ſaid Mrs. Vyvian, as they were ſitting alone together), *or* you are unhappy?"—"I am well, indeed, my dear Madam, (ſhe replied); as to being unhappy, I am not particularly ſo—I own to you, that the continual round of company in which my mother is engaged is far from adding to the pleaſantneſs of my life; and ſometimes I languiſh for an abode in my native country, as ſolitary as our parſonage under the ſouthern hills."

"There is more in it than that, dear girl," ſaid Mrs. Vyvian, with a look that expreſſed her incredulity.

"You would not ſurely wonder if there were, (anſwered Roſalie). I have often wondered at my own inconſequence in not being more depreſſed, when I recol-

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left that, whenever I loſe my mother, I ſhall become a friendleſs and deſtitute orphan."

"Not, if I live, (ſaid Mrs. Vyvian—then, pauſing a moment, ſhe added in a ſlow and ſolemn voice)—for, as I think, my early indulgence to my daughters, or rather to myſelf, in having you ſo much at Holmwood during your infancy, has perhaps been the means of eſtranging you from your family, I conſider it as my duty to make you what little amends I can—much, alas! is not in my power, for the unintentional injury I have done you."

The tears roſe in the eyes of Roſalie as Mrs. Vyvian concluded this ſentence. "O no, deareſt Madam, (anſwered ſhe)—your kindneſs to me, never, never, injured me—ſo far otherwiſe, that I think I ſhould, *but* for that kindneſs, have been the moſt unhappy creature in the world. At leaſt I know that the only moments for which I would wiſh to live

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are thoſe when you permit me to be with you."

"And therefore it is, my love, that I think I have injured you. Your mother, your ſiſters are happy among acquaintance and parties of their own, from which you fly with diſguſt: nor is this all—I am ſenſible that you have refuſed a very advantageous match from the ſame prepoſſeſſion."

"I aſſure you, my dear Mrs. Vyvian, that, as far as I am able to judge, I ſhould have refuſed Mr. Hughſon, though I had never enjoyed the advantages of being admitted to Holmwood. Indeed, had I been in the moſt humble condition of life, I am ſure I ſhould have preferred remaining in it, and even embracing the hardeſt labour, to giving my perſon to a man from whom my heart recoiled."

A deep and long-drawn ſigh, as if ſome painful recollections had ariſen at that moment, half interrupted the anſwer of Mrs. Vyvian, who ſaid, "You are certainly

tainly right in the ſentiment, Roſalie—but it is ſometimes not in the power of young women to reſiſt parental authority. However, admitting that a man, leſs diſagreeable than you repreſent this Hughſon to have been, ſhould now preſent himſelf; tell me, Roſalie—anſwer me ingenuouſly—would he not be equally rejected?"

The eyes of Mrs. Vyvian, which, though generally ſoft and languid, were very expreſſive, were fixed ſteadily on the countenance of Roſalie as ſhe aſked this queſtion. Roſalie, who affected to be ſteadily at work, looked up, and met theſe penetrating eyes: a deep bluſh ſuffuſed her cheeks; ſhe was conſcious of it, and became more confuſed. Yet, making an effort to recollect herſelf, and to ſpeak with compoſure, ſhe ſaid, "O nothing is ſo—ſo very unlikely, as that *any* man ſhould have a preference for me!—I never thought whether I ſhould refuſe any other offer or no—becauſe it is ſo improbable, that

that it is hardly worth while to ſuppoſe about it."

"Not ſo improbable as you affect to imagine, Roſalie—but you are not ſincere. I do not wiſh, my dear, to diſtreſs you, and we will drop the diſcourſe at this time; but another day, perhaps, I may talk to you further, for I have ſomething very ſerious to ſay to you, and I think, Roſalie, you will not deceive me, ſince it may be very material to us both."

More and more confuſed, and not doubting but that by ſome means or other Mrs. Vyvian had diſcovered her marriage, ſhe was too much agitated to allow herſelf to conſider, whether, if this were really the caſe, it was likely Mrs. Vyvian ſhould ſpeak as ſhe had done; but trembling and breathleſs ſhe haſtened to put her work into the work-baſket, and, affecting to underſtand what her friend had laſt ſaid as an hint to depart, ſhe ſmiled, and replying that ſhe was always happy

happy to anſwer any queſtions from her, and that ſhe hoped always to be ingenuous with ſo good a friend, ſhe haſtened away, which Mrs. Vyvian did not oppoſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

THE night that followed this converſation was the moſt uneaſy Roſalie had ever yet known. From what had paſſed ſhe could not doubt but that Mrs. Vyvian knew of her marriage; yet it was incomprehenſible if ſhe did, that ſhe ſhould have expreſſed ſo little anger or diſapprobation: yet what elſe but her knowing of the mutual attachment between her nephew and her protegée could have urged her to ſpeak as ſhe did?

The various conjectures that agitated the mind of Roſalie, allowed her not to ſleep. She had never till now taſted, in its full bitterneſs, the pain that is inflicted on an ingenuous mind by concealment and diſſimulation. Conſcious that ſhe merited the loſs of Mrs. Vyvian's good opinion, and

and that the longer this myſtery was continued on her part the more unpardonable it would appear, ſhe endeavoured to reaſon herſelf into a reſolution of unboſoming herſelf to Mrs. Vyvian, and rather enduring her reproaches for precipitancy and indiſcretion, than ſuffer the miſery of living in continual dread of being detected in a falſehood. The moſt probable conjecture ſhe could form was, that Mrs. Vyvian knew the truth, and had held the converſation ſhe had heard the preceding evening to give Roſalie an opportunity of declaring what was already known. This ſuppoſition ſtrengthened her wavering reſolves, and ſhe aroſe in the morning, believing ſhe had force of mind enough to diſcloſe the ſecret that weighed upon her mind; but when a note came from Mrs. Vyvian requeſting to ſee her as ſoon as ſhe had breakfaſted, her courage at once forſook her, and hardly could ſhe find ſtrength to obey the ſummons.

On her arrival, however, at the houſe of Mrs. Vyvian, ſhe found nothing remarkable in the manner or looks of her friend, who ſeemed as to her health to ſuffer leſs than uſual. Roſalie inquired, as ſhe had been accuſtomed to do, if ſhe ſhould fetch a book—Mrs. Vyvian anſwered no; and bid her take her work.

For ſome time the converſation ran on indifferent topics; at length contriving to bring it without abruptneſs to the point ſhe wiſhed, Mrs. Vyvian renewed the ſubject on which ſhe had touched the day before. Roſalie, whoſe heart was beating ſo violently that ſhe could hardly breathe, liſtened to her in ſilence.

"I ſpoke to you yeſterday, my love, (ſaid ſhe), with a deſire to hear your ſentiments on a matter very important to you. You ſay that you ſometimes accuſe yourſelf of not having ſufficient prevoyance—of looking forward with too little ſolicitude to a future, which certainly promiſes

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but little proſperity.—What, if a way was to offer of eſcaping from theſe fears?—If an eſtabliſhment in moſt reſpects unexceptionable were to be found?"

"I am not my own miſtreſs, you know, my dear Madam," ſaid Roſalie, ſpeaking this equivocation, for it could not be called a falſehood, in ſo low a voice as hardly to be heard.

"That is true, (anſwered Mrs. Vyvian); but I think, indeed I am *ſure*, your *friends* would not diſapprove the propoſal in queſtion—indeed there can be one objection to it, which I think would not have much weight; the gentleman is a Catholic."

"A Catholic!" repeated Roſalie faintly.

"You are ſurpriſed, I ſee; but you know, Roſalie, there *are* conſiderations that may influence perſons to overlook this difference of opinion. Tell me now ingenuouſly: *ſhould* a man of that religion offer, whoſe circumſtances, whoſe character, are ſuch as would preclude all thoſe fears that you, or thoſe who love

you, might have as to your future fate?—Tell me, if you ſhould heſitate to accept of his hand?—Remember I expect you to be candid——Would you receive ſuch a man as your huſband?"

The firſt attempt Roſalie made to anſwer this queſtion failed, ſhe was unable to articulate a ſyllable; collecting, however, all her reſolution, ſhe at laſt found courage to ſay, "I am very ſenſible, Madam, that I ought to feel extremely grateful for the notice of any man of whom you have a good opinion;—but—my dear, dear benefactreſs, (added ſhe in a voice that her agitation rendered indiſtinct, and riſing from her ſeat), I cannot any longer conceal the truth from you—*I am already* married."

"Already married! (exclaimed Mrs. Vyvian with a tone and look of amazement);——Already married!—Merciful Heaven! and to whom?"

"Can I hope, deareſt and beſt of women, to be forgiven, when I tell you—O no!—I dare not—you will reproach me,

me, perhaps deteſt me, and caſt me off for ever."

"Speak, (ſaid Mrs. Vyvian, trembling as much as the unhappy girl)—ſpeak".... She had her ſalts in her hands, and her eyes were eagerly fixed on the face of Roſalie, who was compelled to ſupport herſelf by holding the table.

"Since you have juſt ſaid, Madam, that a Catholic might, in your opinion, make ſuch an alliance." ------

"A Catholic!" cried Mrs. Vyvian, ſtill more faintly.

"I might hope, perhaps, (continued Roſalie), to be forgiven for every thing, but the preſumption of becoming part of your family—of marrying a very near relation of your own."

Roſalie might have continued her confeſſion without interruption another hour, Mrs. Vyvian heard no more, but ſunk back in her chair to all appearance lifeleſs.

In an agony of terror, to which no words can do juſtice, Roſalie flew to-

wards her, then to the bell, which ſhe rang with violence, and when her ſervants came, ſhe aſſiſted in carrying Mrs. Vyvian to her room, though ſhe was herſelf in a ſituation but little better..... "I am undone, (ſaid ſhe)—I ſhall never be forgiven.....No, I ſee that my more than mother cannot, will not, forgive me.—O Montalbert! why are you not here to plead with me for pardon?—What will become of your unhappy Roſalie, if her firſt, her beſt friend abandons and abhors her, while you are far far off, and unable to protect her from the inſults of the reſt of the world?"

While Roſalie was making this mournful monologue on one ſide of the bed, the applications uſed by Mrs. Vyvian's woman were ſo ſucceſsful, that ſhe opened her eyes; but, turning them on Roſalie, ſhe ſeemed ſhocked by the ſight of her, and, without ſpeaking, waved her hand that ſhe might leave her.

This was too much. Roſalie, regardleſs of the preſence of the ſervant, threw herſelf

ſelf upon her knees by the bed ſide, and attempted to take Mrs. Vyvian's hand—ſhe ſnatched it from her with abhorrence, and, ſpeaking with great difficulty, ſaid, "Wretched, moſt wretched girl—if you would not ſee me die before your face—go—I conjure you go."

"Hear me but for one moment; let Hallam leave the room while I ſpeak to you for the laſt time, if it muſt be ſo."

The maid, who underſtood nothing of all this, and who felt no curioſity to know what it meant, reſtrained by ſome degree of terror, retired without being bid; and Roſalie again moſt earneſtly imploring for pity and pardon, Mrs. Vyvian, in a voice at once ſhrill and plaintive, ſaid———

"It is now I feel, in all its ſeverity, the puniſhment I have deſerved: long has the dread of it purſued me—long has it embittered every moment of my wretched exiſtence—but at length it overtakes,

it cruſhes, it deſtroys me..... Miſerable girl!—the unfortunate young man, to whom you believe yourſelf married—is—gracious God!—do I live to tell it——is your brother!"

"My brother!—(cried Roſalie)——Heaven defend me!—My dear Madam—Mrs. Vyvian!——" Nothing occurred to her at that moment, but that the ſenſes of her friend were gone.

"You are my daughter, (ſaid Mrs. Vyvian), the unhappy child of an unfortunate man, whoſe very name I never ſuffer to eſcape my lips."

This confirmed Roſalie in the apprehenſions that her mind was deranged; but, heart ſtruck with horror, ſhe could not ſpeak. Mrs. Vyvian, after a ſhort pauſe, proceeded——.

"Deſtined from your birth to be an outcaſt—to appear a ſtranger even to your mother—I guiltily indulged myſelf with a ſight of you, till Vyvian, my ſon, victim of *my* crimes——"

"Vyvian!

"Vyvian! (cried Roſalie, not knowing what to believe)——it is not Vyvian, but Montalbert, who is my huſband."

"Montalbert!—and am I not then the wretch I thought myſelf?—O Heaven! haſt thou yet mercy upon me!"

"If deareſt, deareſt Mrs. Vyvian, you would but liſten calmly to me-------" Terror, for ſtill ſhe apprehended that Mrs. Vyvian was become inſane, again prevented her proceeding; nor was this impreſſion weakened by the ſolemnity with which ſhe now ſpoke.

"Yes, Roſalie, (ſaid ſhe), you are my child—I am not mad—I am only miſerable—yet not ſo very miſerable as I thought I was. Oh! why have ſo many cruel people been endeavouring to embitter the ſad hours of my unhappy life, by repeating to me continually that Vyvian was ſo ſtrongly attached to you, that neither reaſon nor abſence could cure him of his paſſion. They knew not that

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in raiſing this idea in my mind, they poured into my heart the moſt fatal poiſon.—Alas! they knew not that the dread of this horrible crime drove from me my Roſalie—the dear, unhappy object of ſo many years of ſilent anguiſh and ſtifled ſolicitude."

Roſalie, more and more amazed, and doubting the evidence of her ſenſes, could only liſten in breathleſs wonder, while Mrs. Vyvian, whoſe heart ſeemed to be already relieved, proceeded———

" Montalbert then is your huſband..... Ah! my poor girl, what a ſtore of future miſery you have laid up, it is too probable, for yourſelf. I am now amazed at my own blindneſs. Many, many hours of the moſt cruel anxiety would have been ſpared me, had not ſo ſtrong a prepoſſeſſion been given me of Charles's frantic paſſion for you: yet I now wonder I did not diſcover that it was Montalbert you loved—that you were attached to ſomebody I was ſure, and when I thought

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it was to Charles——oh! no words can do juſtice to the tortures that wrung my ſoul."

Roſalie ſighed deeply; but not knowing what to ſay that ſhould expreſs the mingled emotions ſhe felt, ſhe remained ſilent, ſtill holding the hand of Mrs. Vyvian, who ſeemed to be collecting ſome of the preſence of mind her late terrors had ſo entirely diſſipated.

The pauſe had ſomething of horror in it. Roſalie watched her countenance with a fearful and anxious eye, ſtill aſſailed by the idea of ſome temporary derangement of intellect: For how could ſhe, whoſe parents were never even doubted, be the daughter of Mrs. Vyvian?—The whole ſcene appeared to be a dream, and, during this ſilence, Roſalie apprehended that ſhe ſhould again ſee her relapſe into phrenzy. Till theſe fears gradually ſubſided, as Mrs. Vyvian began with ſome degree of calmneſs to inquire into the particulars of the marriage; it was legally

legally and properly celebrated according to all her ideas.

" But tell me, (added ſhe, when this inquiry was at an end)—was Montalbert ingenuous with you?—Did he tell you that he depends for every thing, but a bare ſubſiſtence, on the bounty of his mother?—Did he tell you, that mother has prejudices the moſt unconquerable againſt the natives and the eſtabliſhed religion of England?..... Ah! my poor dear girl, the ſame ſoftneſs of heart that deſtroyed *me*, has been, I fear, moſt dangerous to you. I cannot, (continued ſhe, deeply ſighing), I cannot now tell you the ſad particulars of your birth.... I have not ſtrength either of mind or body — the horrible idea, that my unhappy, perhaps guilty, attachment would be puniſhed by a yet more fatal one between my children, was ſo very terrible, that it could not be ſuſtained.— I tremble ſtill like a wretch, who having ſeen himſelf on the brink of a precipice into

into which he muſt inevitably fall, is ſnatched from it as it were by miracle, and can hardly believe his ſafety. . . . . Let it ſuffice, my deareſt love, for the preſent, to tell you, that there are the moſt material reaſons why you ſhould conceal, even from Mrs. Leſſington, this unexpected explanation between us—let her not know, I conjure you, what has happened; but let her, at leaſt for a while, ſuppoſe the ſecret known only to her and to me. I need not tell you, that your future welfare, and that of my nephew, depend entirely on your ſtill keeping ſecret this clandeſtine engagement. There are events that may obviate the inconveniencies I foreſee.—Ah, Roſalie! from an affection cheriſhed in ſecret, aroſe the misfortunes that have embittered my life, and fearful to my imagination is any diſſimulation; but I dare not ſpeak farther now—I am unequal to it: already there is too much reaſon to fear that the violence of our

emotions

circumſtances may have given riſe to conjectures which it is ſo neceſſary for us to hide. Let what has happened be ſuppoſed to ariſe from indiſpoſition on my part, and on yours from the fears that indiſpoſition occaſioned; and try, my deſt love, to recover yourſelf as much as you can, and to reſume your uſual compoſure."

Roſalie, ſtill in aſtoniſhment at all ſhe had heard, and ſurprized at the tranquillity with which Mrs. Vyvian now ſpoke, obeyed her as well as ſhe could; but, as ſhe kiſſed her hand, and would have bade her adieu, the new ſenſations ſhe felt, while ſhe conſidered as her mother the friend whom ſhe had always ſo tenderly loved, quite overcame her ſpirits, and her tears blinded her. Mrs. Vyvian, yielding for a moment to the tenderneſs ſhe had for ſo many years ſuppreſſed, claſped her daughter fondly to her boſom, and, for almoſt the firſt time in her life, called her by the dear name

name of her child. There was ſome danger that they would both have indulged too long in theſe effuſions of natural affection, but a rap at the chamber-door compelled them haſtily to recover themſelves. It was a meſſage from the venerable Mr. Hayward, who, returning from his morning walk, had heard of Mrs. Vyvian's being greatly indiſpoſed, and now ſolicited leave to inquire after her. Roſalie, therefore, who knew that for every wound of the mind Mrs. Vyvian found a reſource in the ſpiritual conſolation offered her by this excellent man, haſtened to follow her wiſhes as to leaving her, and remaining only a few moments in another room to recover herſelf yet a little more, ſhe left the houſe of her real, and returned to that of her ſuppoſed mother.

Nothing could be leſs in harmony with her feelings than the group ſhe found aſſembled there. A large party from the city, ſome of whom were entirely unknown to her, had been on a jaunt of pleaſure

pleaſure to a village about ten miles diſtant, and, on their way back to London, had been engaged by Miſs Leſſington, who was one of the company, to dine and paſs the reſt of the day at her mother's houſe at Hampſtead.

Some of the gentlemen, who ſeemed to be of that rank of beings who are called "*City Bucks—Young Men of Spirit——Fine Flaſhy Fellows*"——were, in Roſalie's opinion, the rudeſt and moſt inſupportable ſet ſhe had ever yet ſeen: agitated almoſt beyond endurance, as her ſpirits were, ſhe was yet under the mortifying neceſſity of remaining for ſome time in this company, which did not ſeparate till one of the men propoſed finiſhing their pleaſurable party by a jaunt to Ranelagh: it was now early ſpring, and it was not without difficulty that ſhe was at length allowed to decline going, and ſaw Miſs Leſſington and this group of good folks, ſo perfectly contented with themſelves, depart without her.

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She was then left alone with her ſuppoſed mother; but to conceal from her the perturbation of her mind was by no means difficult. Mrs. Leſſington, whoſe new manner of life was much more pleaſing to her than that ſhe had lived in, the uniform inſipidity of a country village, retained, however, ſo much of her original notable œconomy, as to uſe every hour to advantage which was not given to the vigils of the card table; ſhe now, therefore, buſily employed herſelf in domeſtic arrangements, that ſhe might enjoy with higher reliſh the rubber of the evening; and ſhe had, therefore, no time to make obſervations on the appearance of Roſalie.

Thus left to herſelf, ſhe reviewed with aſtoniſhment the ſtrange diſcovery of the day; to find herſelf the daughter of Mrs. Vyvian, though of her father ſhe was yet ignorant, ſeemed to be knowledge more flattering, more elevating than any event that could be imagined.——She was now ready to account for a thouſand things

which had before ſeemed extraordinary. The little affection Mr. Leſſington had ever ſhewn for her; his leaving her name entirely out of his will; the indifference of Mrs. Leſſington, who ſometimes, and particularly lately, had ſeemed to forget her aſſumed character of mother, and to expreſs only what ſhe felt, the cold civility of a common acquaintance; the want of even the ſlighteſt family reſemblance between her and the other children of the family, and innumerable other circumſtances which now crowded together upon her recollection. But if on one hand ſhe now ſaw only ſtrangers among thoſe whom ſhe had hitherto conſidered as her neareſt relations, ſhe beheld in Mrs. Vyvian a mother whom her heart bounded to acknowledge. To be her daughter, to be with her knowledge the wife of Montalbert, left her hardly any thing to wiſh, but that the hour was come when ſhe might claim at leaſt the latter title, and be received as belonging to a man, who had not diſdained to give her that title

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when he thought her Roſalie Leſſington, and knew not that ſhe inherited a portion of the noble blood of the Montalbert family: a family which, though now debarred from farther elevation by differing from the eſtabliſhed religion, and eſtranged by foreign connections, had not formerly been inferior, either in antiquity or honour, to the moſt illuſtrious of the Britiſh nobility.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.